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NIGERIAN DAYS

THE GREAT NIGER



NIGERIAN DAYS
BY A. C. G. HASTINGS
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO
SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, G.C.M.G.
AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS WIDE
EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

FOR EMPIRE BUILDERS AND OTHERS

IT is good for people nowadays to read a book such as the present. At once it brings one face to face with the realities of life, and lifts the veil that even still conceals how, and in what manner, our present African Empire was built up. In Central Africa, and in especial in Nigeria, there were no juggling speculators with a foot in Africa, another in the Stock Exchange, and both hands working industriously in the public's trouser pockets. There were no Press-boomed Empire Builders; no manipulators of the money market; no gimcrack raids, with the raiders "returned empty" by the men whom they had fallen upon in time of peace. There was no flag-wagging, no cant about the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race, and not a single word about the White Man's Burden, whatever that may mean, for it has never been explained since first Pizarro and Cortes, Valdivia and the rest of the Conquistadores, imposed themselves upon the Indians of Peru and Mexico. Perhaps in Central Africa alone of all our colonies the phrase had a real meaning, for all the conquest was carried out without a massacre, and no one made a fortune by it.

So far from dispossessing or from filching, under one protest or another, the people's lands from them, the young administrators set out to put down slavery, extinguish cannibalism, and introduce what they believed would prove a better life. Luckily, Nature had

not cursed the land with mines. At least there were no gold mines, so that the negroes were not burdened with the scum of all the world falling upon them like an army of white ants, devouring everything. Usually the burden is the white man himself, who generally rides on the black man's shoulders ; but in Nigeria it really seems that if the white man did not bear the black upon his back, at least he took him by the hand.

When globe-trotters all write their books after a month or two in Timbuctoo, Wadai, in Patagonia or New Guinea, telling the world how mosquitoes and fleas devoured them ; about their dinner with the Governor, or interview with the chief of some tribe or other to whom they talk quite fluently, having apparently the gift of tongues, for no one thinks that they are filled with new (palm) wine, it is refreshing to read *Nigerian Days*.

Written with great sincerity and with equal modesty, it is the record of eighteen long years spent on the confines of the Empire, in heat, in solitude ; for in the multitude of negroes a solitary white man is just as much alone as on a desert island, exposed to frequent fevers in a climate hostile to North Europeans, and with no single ray of limelight turned upon any one throughout the colony. Who knows the name of the first resident at Kano, or who first conquered it, the area or population of the colony, or in which provinces they speak Nupe or Fulani, without a reference to an encyclopædia ? Yet in South Africa, where the speculative pioneers of Empire ranted and raved and, by their quarrels for supremacy with the Boers, came within an ace of raising the whole world against us, Schweinderby and Mosesville are household words.

Thus a book written without spread-eagleism, devoid of bombast, and without the cheap expression of opinion of the average globe-trotter, who in a month is competent to settle the "native" question of a country that he has only seen as in a cinema, becomes a valuable addition to our knowledge of Nigeria.

Little, indeed, of any value has been written except dry books full of statistics, and the aforesaid globe-trotters' lucubrations about the country, since *El Tarikh es Sudan*, and that is not a work of yesterday.

Therefore, if anybody wants to know, and there must be such people, how different the life of an administrator of a district in Nigeria is to that led by pioneers upon the Rand or in the town of Kimberley, he will find all about it in this book. He will find in it something that an Englishman can well be proud of, and rise from reading it without a bad taste in the mouth or nausea in the soul, such as one experiences after a perusal of the doings of the Jew and Christian magnates in South Africa; for in the whole book there is no notice of a fortune being made, and not a word of any native tribe blown up by dynamite, as happened, so folks say, in the same hills where now a pioneer has found a resting-place from all the toils of Empire building.

In 1906, when the writer first went out to take up his duties as a junior political officer, the colony was in its infancy.

Whether he took notes or not of his first journey up the Niger I do not know, but I should think that there was no necessity to do so, for his account of it remains as fresh as if he had done it yesterday, not after an interval of eighteen years. The first journey of the

kind always impresses itself upon the brain with a poignancy that experience rubs away.

Reading it, with but the difference of names, I fancied I was reading of a journey up the Magdalena or the Paraguay. The stern-wheel boats, the heat, the dank smell of the Tropics, the thick white mists, the dense threatening lines of vegetation upon the banks that seem as if Nature has reared a barrier against mankind, the shallows and the sandbanks with the basking crocodiles (alligators on the Magdalena or the Paraguay), the stopping to take in wood, with naked figures running up and down the banks looking like demons in the firelight, the insects, dripping atmosphere, the moonlight nights that seem almost theatrical, with all the values altered and the shadows deepened, all was the same. So like it was, that I kept thinking, "Now they are close to Honda," or "They must surely soon reach Corumbá."

Even the fellow sounding, half asleep, though on the Paraguay or Magdalena he would have sounded with a bamboo pole and swung no lead-line, all was identical.

One thing alone seemed as it were unnatural, or at the least unconstitutional. The engineer was not a Scotsman. How this occurred I cannot for the life of me imagine, for it is an axiom on tropic rivers to put your head over the scuttle of the engine-room and roar out "Mac!" Then a compatriot appears, carrying a bottle in his hand.

The halts, of course, were different, for on the Niger there are no flat-roofed, dazzling white towns, with some national ensign or another, generally barred blue and white, and with a sun or moon rising above the mountains in the dexter chief, with an ironic smile.

Upon the Niger the wheezy stern-wheeler, fighting against the self-same coffee-coloured stream as in South America, reached native villages, composed of thatched mud huts,¹ looking like haystacks. No Captain of the Port dressed in white duck came aboard for a drink, dragging his sword across the deck, and there was no Italian "pulperia" keeper retailing caña, grappa, or vermouth through a barred grating, with his revolver ready to his hand. A fever-stricken European storekeeper took his place, who gazed upon the steamer with lack-lustre eyes and watched her disappear, leaving him marooned to buy his ivory and kola-nuts, palm oil or what kind of notions people buy upon the Niger, till the next vessel passed.

Marabouts fished upon the banks, whilst on my rivers cranes and herons sat upon the trees; and though there is no mention of them, I feel pretty sure that flocks of parrots flew shrieking through the trees.

Bauchi was the writer's destination, and after three or four days to Lokoja, twenty-three still remained to do to Amar, and then fourteen on horseback to his district.

These journeys in poling barges seem exactly alike in Africa and the Americas, except that the barge in which the writer left Lokoja was built of steel, whilst on the Orinoco, Paraguay or Amazon, they are made of wood. Upon page 24 there is a photograph of a native barge passing a rapid, so like the barges of the same kind on the Paraguay or Parana, that it appears I knew it in another state of life.

Arrived at Bauchi, after a journey of six weeks, he found his Chief, Oliver Howard, awaiting him. I knew

¹ See photograph, p. 10.

him as a young diplomatist in Tangier. He had now changed into a capable and keen administrator, and it is plain that the young political officer was much impressed with his determination and his energy. Nigeria took toll of him as it has done of many others, and he died young, before he had the time to make a name.

Duty in Bauchi province consisted chiefly of being always on the march, to find out native villages marked roughly on the map, collect the taxes, put down cannibalism, and generally introduce some kind of order in the turbulent Emirate.

In the first ten months he covered three thousand miles on horseback, travelling two hundred and seventy days. To assist him in his work, he had an interpreter, three Government paid messengers and six native police, though on occasion he could draw on the Emir for more soldiers or police.

Absolutely alone, without another European at his station and ignorant of Haura at the first, he buckled to the administration of a great territory. I hold that it is well for men in England to understand with what small forces these great territories were administered at first in Central Africa. Reading of what the writer so modestly sets down, one feels impelled to shout now and again, "Good boy!" and to look slyly out of the window to see if there is any Union Jack hoisted upon the nearest police station. The whole book is a record of hard work unostentatiously performed, and one suspects not too well rewarded by a grateful country.

Adventures seem to have been fairly frequent, and, in fact, the whole life of a Nigerian administrator was an adventure in those days. The writer had one close

call, in a fight with the Pagan Tulas, just getting home with his revolver before a warrior had time to wash his spear in blood.

This he tells quietly as part of the day's doings, and passes on to say that the lesson did the fellows good and made them rub their heads.

This summary way of obtaining peace was not approved of at Headquarters, where, of course, they would have preferred that the spearsman should have bagged the District Officer, so that a better feeling might have been superinduced, and, incidentally, that the Tulas should have had white man to eat as an experience.

Next time they sent him to another tribe called Tangale, to try the virtues of moral suasion on them, without resort to force. It seems as if the expedition really called for greater nerve than that against the Tulas, which ended in a fight.

Seated upon the ground, supported by some twenty of the native police, he called a bluff on the whole tribe, whose warriors numbered several hundred, who surrounded him on every side. In a speech through an interpreter (and oratory must suffer at second hand), he told the astonished warriors that in two hours he would blow a whistle, and when they heard it they must deliver up their arms. They did so to his great astonishment, and he refers to the affair as "most colossal cheek."

It was so, and one wonders what the central authorities thought about it. Probably as they had not risked their skins, they wrote him asking if he had had the Tangale baptized.

The book contains a mine of information about

prices of grain, of horses, of provisions and of the working of the native mind.

Horses he loved, and owned some thirty of them, covering six and twenty thousand miles in the course of his eighteen years of service.

One ride in Gombe, of some seventy-five miles by night, makes interesting reading, and when the writer's joints become too stiff for him to ride, will be with him as an abiding memory to his last hour on earth.

The description of the moonlight shadows in the bush, the way the different stars appear, the false dawn in the sky and then the sunrise, makes a fine picture ; such a one as none can paint but those who have experienced such rides.¹

In all those countries people have to shoot large animals with quick-firing rifles, sometimes because they spoil the natives' crops ; at times in self-defence ; again at others, out of the wanton folly that is known as sport.

" I was no slaughterer at any time," he says, to his great honour, and goes on to say he never would shoot a giraffe, an animal that he calls " most inoffensive," and he might have added, beautiful. It seems incredible that any one could do so. The Cockney " sportsman " who has murdered one, paying a licence to commit his crime, might just as well go out and stalk his maiden aunt at Cheltenham, on the Parade, and having put a bullet through her back, hang up her wig as a memento of his prowess in his smoking-room.

During the eighteen years the country gradually developed and became peaceful, or at least more peaceful than it was at first. Ford cars appeared, and natives now and then appeared in European clothes,

¹ *Ciò sa l' tuo dottore.*

wearing pith helmets over their woolly heads, that had been for centuries impervious to sun.

No doubt they called themselves "Native Kalistians." It appears that by the wearing of our clothes, they lost the power of standing heat and cold and of resisting little maladies that formerly they got rid of by the assistance of some Ju-Ju or another, what, in fact, is known to us, the children of the light, as Faith Healing.

This most interesting book closes with the writer's profession of his affection for the people amongst whom he had lived and laboured for so many years. With the regret natural to sensible but artistic minds, he welcomes progress, but looks back upon the days when there was none of it with a half-stifled longing and regret.

Truly the colony has been lucky in its administrators, Sir Henry Hesketh Ball, Sir Frederick Lugard, Sir Percy Girouard, and Sir Hugh Clifford; but luckier still to have possessed men of the stamp of Hastings, who patiently and conscientiously performed arduous and dangerous work in a dark corner of the earth.

The book is notable for many things. It reveals a forceful personality, not altogether in the things he writes, but in the things one feels he could have written had he been minded so to write. Lastly, it shows how a great Empire can be built up almost without injustice and without bloodshed, and what the builders have to face as they lay stone on stone.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM,

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NIGERIAN DAYS



NIGERIAN DAYS

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

THE *Akabo* moved with bare steering-way upon the brown heaving water, current streaked and stained with queer greasy patches like a grimy cloth in some low eating-house. A moist and heavy air tainted with the smell of rotting vegetation hung stagnant on the surface, and laid its clammy finger on me, as I reached the deck in the grey dawn. We were heading shorewards to where the mangroves spread wide on either hand and crept low down upon the water's edge, the grey-green line of them half veiled by drifting mist which swirled and writhed along the shore. No opening showed in the forbidding barrier, nor any sign of life or habitation; the soul-depressing curtain stared blindly at the entering steamer in grim dissent to its approach, until, as though the very ship disliked the thought of entry, she trembled to her reversing screw and the anchor roared down into the mud and silt.

This very cheerless spot, as I first saw it, early in May of 1906, was really, though one would not guess it, the entrance to the Forcados River, a branch mouth of the great Niger which wanders from away beyond

far Timbuctu, 2000 miles or more, and crawls by many a twisting channel through its delta to the sea, tingling salt water for many miles out with Africa's mud and slime. Of those who left the Mersey three weeks before, a bare handful remained on board. Sierra Leone, Monrovia, Cape Coast and other ports had claimed their share of us, and in truth the dumping-ground of our companions had seemed pleasanter than our own. Grier and I were the only political officers on board; assistant residents we were called, appointed to Northern Nigeria. The rest were mostly apprentices, belonging to the companies who traded on the river, and going to what seemed to be a dog's life, to judge from the anecdotes of one of them, an old hand, who described his own experiences and, filled with good wine, rejoiced in putting the fear of God into the shivering youngsters.

As for us, a vagueness as to our destination and the form our work would take was the chief feeling in the minds of Grier and myself. A copy of the Northern Nigerian laws, such as had been promulgated up to that time (heavens! how they have increased and multiplied since then), together with a curious little official effort, called the West African pocket-book, comprised my only literature on the country. The one has long since mouldered into dust upon some office shelf, the other, misleading me completely on most subjects, was very soon thrown upon the fire. Thus ill-equipped, or perchance the better armed by ignorance, for the new land, we gazed upon its entrance, filled with high anticipation, and the last ship's breakfast we should have for many a day.

An hour passed, and then, like some furtive, cautious animal peering out from hiding, a small branch boat

pushed its grey nose round the corner of a hidden indent in the tropic screen and lurched out across the river bar, to tranship us and our household gods up to the river port. Only at full tide, it seemed, could the ocean boat crawl in over the bank of sand, and even then, if not exactly timed, the effort ended in her sitting there till the next tide washed her off. Some years later I was so to cross that bar, and I remember how we bumped and slithered on the sand, finally coming to a sudden stop which shot the breakfast plates on to the floor.

The branch boat swung to her anchor a quarter of a mile away, and our kit was loaded into surf boats to be ferried over. Grier and I had many cases, for we were carrying our houses on our backs into the far hinterland. Nothing was to be got up country. Clothes, camp kit and saddlery, cooking pans, provisions for a year, everything had to be brought from England, and fifty or sixty loads of half a hundredweight apiece were the least that one could manage with. The young assistant resident of those days had a big outlay to make before his tour began, and a pretty large hole was bored in his salary, which either would be hypothecated in advance by his outfitters or many a month would pass before the last cheque went home to square accounts. The careless or ignorant had articles thrust upon them by enterprising firms who kindly acted as banking agents to ensure their payment. These avowed essentials became useless encumbrances on arrival, rotting in some lonely bush hut, till climate or white ants destroyed them. Their owners' curses fell lightly enough no doubt upon the providers' heads, as all such curses must; for 4000

miles of water is a lot to cover, and some owners never come back at all.

Transshipping finished, our own turn came, in the "mammy chair," which was a deep wooden box with seats, and covered with a gaudy Union Jack. The Krooboy at the winch displayed all the lack of intelligence which one might expect of him. With a rattling roar he swung us from the deck out board, dangled us there, with open-mouthed imbecility, and choosing the moment when the *Akabo* rolled, heaving her rusty hull out of the water, he lowered us in perfect time to bang against the iron side plates. Unmoved thereafter by the yell of execration from the frantic second mate, he dropped us calmly and with almost calculated idiocy into the rising surf boat, with a crash that almost stove her in.

Aboard the branch boat we found that it was then low water on this bar, and that we should not go in till evening. On cold beef, with bread and beer brought from the *Akabo*, we lunched and listened to the yarns of the branch boat skipper, mostly of deaths or dyings, and larded with grumbles and oaths that his was no job for a white man. Round faced, pot-bellied little man, I see him now, clad in coat and trousers of dirty drill, and a grubby singlet, with a grease-stained helmet—once white—upon his head, supping his beer with a tropic thirst. To one who grumbled at the cabin's size, he said: "You're lucky. Last trip we hung about all day for the blasted mail boat. Very 'ot it was, and our engineer pegged out with 'eat stroke. We 'ad to shove 'im under this 'ere table to be out of the way, and the passengers wasn't 'alf surprised to see 'is legs sticking out from under. Complained, they did, that they



THE 'MAMMY CHAIR'

was crowded enough already." It seemed then that there was no reason for undue complaint, just as we should thank our stars so often in this life of ours that things which might be better are no worse.

Away across the bar we steamed that evening, and winding up the river drew the mangrove curtain across behind us. We passed Forcados, a God-forgotten group of huts and shanties forlorn and gloomy in the fading light. Rain fell here, they told me, on most days in the year, and one could well believe it—everything seemed damp and dripping and steaming with a poisonous heat. A mile or two beyond we anchored off Burutu, the river port, to find a stern-wheel river boat nuzzling up along our quarter with important fuss and thrashing paddles. Once more we were transferred, with bag and baggage, and sheering off we made for the Burutu shore, to tie up there and wait for moonrise. In the now falling dusk the lights shone out from bungalow and store, while grouped upon the "beach" a gang of nondescripts with chits of recommendation clamoured for employment as servants. Talking what they thought to be English, and clad or unclad in every sort of garb from trousers to a loin cloth, they displayed differing types of feature, size and colouring, and their papers showed a like variety. One dressy young fellow, in white duck suit, stolen perhaps from his late master, produced with pride a chit which read: "This boy Moma is utterly useless, lazy and incompetent." Another, perhaps more kindly, described its bearer thus: "Has done well, but should be watched and occasionally beaten for the good of his soul."

A sleek, crafty-looking individual, posing as a cook, could show but one brief remark upon his dirty paper.

"I have not yet been poisoned." But easily the best, a nutshell record, ran: "This cook leaves me owing to illness—mine." So from these doubtful candidates I chose one, with non-committal paper, feeling that to a boy of such hideous features and mournful air, God must surely grant some compensation in the way of character. A chaotic evening was that first for all of us. The Government stern-wheeler *Empire* possessed two tiers of deck. Upon the upper—awning roofed—we were to sleep and eat, with beds spread where we would. The lower deck was an inferno. Amidships stood the cranky engines, sizzling and clanking, unguarded by a rail from any careless passer who might stumble against them. Great stacks of wood for fuel were piled on high, with cooking stoves and all the ship's impedimenta. Scattered everywhere lay our bales and boxes with other cargo for up river, and here too the crew lived, and scores of native passengers who with their children, bundles, calabashes of food, dried fish and pots, crowded up the space to overflowing.

This lower deck, unrailed, lay but a foot above the water, and from it would fall or roll, not uncommonly, some luckless being who, if it were night, would not be found again. Little naked babies crawled like black beetles on their stomachs about the place, tripping up the passers-by, while everywhere there rose a constant shouting, screaming and chattering from the native ladies preparing their evening meal. Into this den of noise and darkness I went, guided only by a hurricane lamp, and diving among the half-seen boxes sought and collected requirements for the night—bed and bedding, food, whisky, lamps and clothes.

Master and servant, after a strenuous time, emerged

perspiring into the upper air, with an assortment which was inadequate enough, but all that patience and endurance could procure; and after a scratch meal, eaten in hurry and discomfort, I sought my chair upon the forward deck and watched the process of our start. The crazy telegraph rang out, and with the casting of her mooring ropes the *Empire*, slow paddles churning, moved out into mid-stream. The ugly dreariness of the mangroves had vanished with the day. Under the rising moon, they lay now along the still black-water alleys, blurred into dark mysterious walls, night-softened into beauty. Here and there upon their edge a swamp tree lurked swathed into monstrous formless shape by water-creepers writhing to its very top. Great solitary palms began to pass us like shadowy sentinels upon their beat. The stream had branched into a hundred narrow lanes of water turning and twisting every way, and cutting the swamp into isles of matted roofs of every shape.

The moon, rising higher at our bow as we threaded this labyrinth of water, lit up the scene and showed it us in greater detail; showed us many a narrow creek-mouth veiled with hanging creepers through which the dark water poured into the main channel. No doubt a village lurked within these backwaters, unseen, unknown by the outer world, and lived its quiet life there indifferent to what passed beyond. A little *juju* house upon a platform, grass thatched and set high-stilted from the water, glided past in ghostly fashion, and leered upon us in its sombre mystery. And now, as if conquering the mangroves with every mile, but cloyed and strangled still with clinging creeper and with water weed, the trees and undergrowth became more frequent, taking on a natural and more vigorous appearance, as

though they found a healthier soil about their roots, with dipping boughs set heaving by the steamer's wash. For long I watched the real beauty of the scene, then wearied, sought my bed upon the open deck, and from it saw, as it were, the last remembered thing, the calm impassive face of the black quartermaster swinging the wheel this way and that and gazing with unwinking stare along the silver pathway to the east.

A soft grey dawn with white mist low upon the water, green dripping banks emerging here and there, and my boy with morning tea, how got, I cannot tell. Borrowed or stolen as is their custom and the mark of faithful service. I was to learn much in later days of the Nigerian servant, a marvellous class, a class apart, who bring to their master's head grey hairs where none should be, who rasp the temper and destroy the soul. Labour with them that they produce a well-cooked dinner, and well served to please your guests: with assurance and complacent mien they will concoct and tender a vile abomination. Rely on them for anything and they fail you, reward them and they show no gratitude. But in the bad hours in the lonely bush, those weary hours after the long march when the rain pours down, and rest-house roof is leaking, when supplies are scarce, wood damp or non-existent, and carriers straggle far behind, then your servants are not boys but men. Dry you shall sleep, though they be damp, from some miraculous source and by undreamed-of means you will be fed and warmed, the while they endure your rattled temper with composure, and make nothing of their own malaise. So they become a class we bless as well as curse, even though themselves unbalanced they

upset all the calculations of a balanced mind, which of all things is the most irritating to those who are so satisfied with their own superior attainments.

Day by day we steamed along and saw the country slowly changing as we climbed the river. The delta left behind us, and already in the main stream of the Niger—here well over half a mile wide—we found the banks now heavily wooded with the great forest trees and huge oil palms, and sloping down from 30 feet above us. From the bunches of canoes lying at their stakes, worn pathways led up to villages upon the brink to which, from time to time, we sidled in with frantic whistling and anchored to renew our fuel, while the crew attacked the cords of wood stacked along the bank and hurled them with resounding thumps upon the lower deck. Usually at these stopping-places we would see a tin-roofed store standing solitary amidst the mud huts, and from it would emerge a sickly faced European youth in white shirt and trousers, to stand with hands in pockets and cigarette hanging from his mouth, staring down upon the steamer, the one sight he might have of the world outside for a week or more. Around him would be piled the mighty casks of palm oil, result of his lonely efforts on his employer's behalf to barter with the natives of the Niger valley. Then, as we churned out into the stream again, he would turn away back once more to his unenviable labours.

In this month the Niger was at its lowest and we had come to the region of the sandbanks. Far off they showed as long spits pushing out from either bank, and seeming to bar all progress. In closer view we saw them sometimes as great curving banks 8 to 10 feet high, deep water swirling under them ; sometimes as shoaling

flats, with humped ribbed backs an inch or two above the water, warning us to give them a wide berth. With every year these banks are shifting, and altering their place upon the chart, and though the river pilots watch them well, and do their best to gauge the changes, the steamers ground with painful frequency and sometimes remain for hours immovable. A member of our crew stands swinging the lead in lazy fashion. "Five fut," he cries, and once again, "Four fut." He drowzes on in the hot sun, sounding quite mechanically and with half-closed eyes. "Six fut," he bawls, not looking at the shoaling water, and upon the word with bump and dragging slither we are fast.

Commotion arises, and much chatter, for nothing can be done in this land without noise. The engines are reversed to drag us off, quite fruitlessly, however, and every available man of crew and passengers below jumps overboard into 3 feet of water, till, with heave and strain, they get her off.

Away in the far distance the Niger winds, the tree-fringed banks appear to meet ahead and bar our course, but ever they open out once more to show new vistas across the interminable sand. The sunlight glints upon the long yellow grey bodies of the crocodiles who lie with yawning mouths upon the banks, the noisy paddles rouse them from their lethargy, and sliding with quick creeping run into the stream they disappear. Great marabouts stalk along the shallows, or stand in solemn meditation on the sand, while crested crane and every sort of wading bird dips and splashes on the feeding-grounds. Sometimes a snowy egret flaps its low way upon the water from bank to bank; a herd of hippo is passing down the river to the lower pools, and here and



A NATIVE TOWN



THE NIGER FROM BARO

there a nostril and a cocked up ear show above the water, sinking again at sight of us.

We passed Onitsha, where the Catholic fathers have their mission school, and teach the young Nigerian useful trades and agriculture, hand in hand with the more difficult art of religion, feeling perhaps, and rightly, that a good carpenter may be at least the equal of a doubtful Christian, and thereby earning the gratitude of many for their good work, and making for some progress after all. But it is not merely by these useful methods that the fathers serve their cause. Broadmindedness, a sense of humour and a keen insight into the limitations of their flock, fit them well to tackle the problems of the pagan mind. So on to Iddah, the official boundary of Northern and Southern Nigeria and the customs station. Examination of our goods was not required here, the customs clerk, a quiet and unassuming gentleman of vacant expression, merely handing us the declaration forms, which, filled in, he took back again lethargically and, crediting us with much honesty, received the dues we thought fit to pay him. With these, and wearing the complacent expression of one who has nobly done his duty, he fell into his boat and departed for the shore, doubtless to resume the long hours of repose so violently interrupted, while the *Empire* hooted in farewell and ploughed off on the last stage of our journey. We reached Lokoja the following day. The crew, whose garments had been, to say the least of it, sketchy on the voyage up, being chiefly a blanket or less, now appeared as honest Jack Tars in spotless white rig with jaunty caps, for this occasion only, and made themselves busy on the upper deck. The steamer whistled loud and long to warn Lokoja of our coming, and soon

we swung in towards the beach, and made fast to a small jetty of tarred piles. A chattering crowd ashore hurled yells of welcome, or screamed in recognition of some homing traveller upon the hell deck below us, bending double with hands clasped between their knees and shouting with mirth. An immaculate native clerk greeted some colleague with a condescending "Welcome, my friend, I hope you well, sah." A fatigue party of native soldiers stood at ease, waiting probably for some mess stores, but of Europeans there were none to meet us. When nothing transpired in half an hour and our kit had been thrown upon the beach, we followed it, and set off, Grier and I, to find our way to the cantonment.

Lokoja lay upon some level ground, backed by circling hills, with the flat-topped hill of Patti overhanging the native town. Along a well-made road we passed in the moist heat of afternoon through avenues of limes and mango trees. Compounds well laid out, with paths and flowering shrubs, flamboyant oleanders and acacias, surrounded each their wooden bungalow raised upon piles. They seemed closed up and empty, but, as we were to know, it was the hour of the siesta, when none may waken or disturb the weary officials from their slumber. Presently we spied one more energetic than his fellows, or whom perhaps the flies had kept from his repose. We hailed him and, entering the house, found he was the cantonment Magistrate, in whose hands lay our disposal. Rather airily he explained that we had not been expected to arrive till evening, when, of course, we should have been met and welcomed, but to the meanest intelligence it was plain that no one had the least intention of meeting any steamer which thought well to

arrive in the hot afternoon. This point of view became more reasonable to me after tea and later a cocktail, and certainly from then on our host proved most helpful and kind. It was from him we learnt of our future movements—Grier was posted to Zaria province and I to Bauchi. We were to part company at Lokoja, he going on up the Niger to Zungeru, the capital, and I to branch off up the Benue River which enters the Niger at this point.

Later on we watched the polo played that evening, and afterwards were most pleasantly entertained at the mess of the 2nd Battalion of the Nigeria Regiment; but it was, I think, at the bungalow of the Postmaster-General that we finished up the night. A big genial Irishman of rabid politics but unbounded hospitality, his humour was infectious. "Will ye have Scotch or whisky now?" he would say, with a twinkle, and the bottle of John Jamieson upon the table showed well enough which brand he thought worthy of the name. As we sat there in that tropic garden, with the night wind stirring the bougainvillæa and bringing to us the strong scent of the frangipanni, this new land took on a glamour that would fade perhaps with day. I watched the fireflies flickering in the undergrowth, the great stars gleaming overhead, and listened to the talk and chaff of my companions, not wise or brilliant it may be, but of such things as men discuss in a new country in the making; of the simple things in life, which after all import the most; of work, called "shop," of play and all the daily details of existence. Mostly I have forgotten the names of them, the men who talked that night. Some are dead no doubt, the rest are scattered, and we shall not meet again, but good memories I have

of them and of their fellowship, remembering always that while big brains are much to be desired big hearts are more so, and help us better on the road of life. And then to my bed in a bare Government rest-house—where my guardian boy lies sleeping on the concrete floor—and, I am certain, to unbroken slumber.

While waiting for my transport up the Benue, I set to work to find out all I could about the country where my life and work were to lie in the coming years, from Nigerian Government reports.

The Royal Niger Company had been granted a non-monopoly charter in 1886 over a vast area of territories which extended as far north as Sokoto and Lake Chad. Visits by the Company's agents had been made to many of the far distant chiefs who ruled them, and treaties had been made in most cases. It was, however, a difficult matter for a trading company to administer so large an area, and its sphere of real influence was confined to the few miles breadth along the Niger. Some ten years later the policy of the French became aggressive. They seized the country of the South Sudan, lying just north and west of the country roughly covered by the Niger Companies' treaties, and their action led to the fixing of definite frontiers. In 1900 the British Government assumed control of the area thus defined, granting to the ex-chartered company a royalty on all minerals to be found therein or developed in the future. The next five years were devoted to the effective occupation of the country which was now styled Northern Nigeria, the establishment of Administrative control, by means of civil officers supported by military posts, and the division of the country into units called provinces, for this purpose.

I gathered that warlike resistance by the Moslem chiefs except in a few instances had not been formidable, a matter which surprised me later, when I found that, from the great Emirs of Sokoto and Kano down to the least powerful chiefs of Lapai or Jamaari, there were some twenty-six or twenty-seven of these Moslem potentates whose warriors numbered thousands, together with scores of minor independent chieflings who would be supposed to resent most bitterly the advent of the British. In after years I came to know most of them intimately, and while I realized that theirs could never have been the fortune of victory, I marvelled that, with such numbers at command, they had not made a better bid for supremacy than they did. Some put up the best fight they could, others a half-hearted show of resistance, while the greater number submitted without a blow.

Twelve provinces there were whose average area was eventually discovered to be some 17,000 square miles, though some were infinitely larger than this. The population was but roughly known at that time, and the maps in detail were in their infancy. Traveling by land or water was generally a lengthy business, and to reach the far-lying northernmost provinces two months was not uncommonly taken. Roads were mere bush tracks, rest-houses were few, and transport of baggage was made by steamer, barge, or canoe upon the rivers, and by carriers, or sometimes by pack animals, on land. Throughout the greater part of the country horses were available and used by every one—as I learnt to my great pleasure—while in the tsetse-fly areas one walked or hammocked.

Northern Nigeria was in receipt of an Imperial

grant-in-aid, a very necessary thing in those days to maintain the services of all departments, small as they were; but direct taxation of the natives had been inaugurated, and at the time of my arrival was being collected to the amount of some £70,000 in the year. I believe in the year of its inception something like £1000 was the total obtained. Eighteen years was to see a wonderful increase in that total of 1906, derived from an incidence both light and equitable upon the millions then uncounted, but the advance even in three years was most remarkable, and showed something of the energy at work up there.

We of the Political Department numbered about sixty all told (to-day in amalgamated Nigeria they exceed four hundred). We underwent no painful examination to test the quality of our brains, or our capacity for administration, but we were men of some experience, and I fancy there were few of us who had not seen Africa before, or knew something of the native races of the Empire. The young officer of to-day is required to pass a not too crucial test of knowledge in a string of subjects from law to logwood, and does so more or less efficiently. He learns to use a prismatic compass, and plot his wavering results neatly upon paper. He tries and fails, like most of us, to understand the Moslem law of inheritance, wrestling with the accursed fractions of estate division, and reviling the uterine brother or consanguine sister in his struggles. He can tell you why the mosquito sings before it stings, what the boll-worm does to cotton, how to treat a snake bite, with a hundred other things, and emerges from the contest a worthy if somewhat puzzled candidate for the work. It may be that I have become *laudator temporis acti* now, and feel

that we learnt all that, and just as quickly, in the field; yet perhaps the younger generation will profit by the grounding, and at least it will not mar, even if it does not make, a good political officer.

So, unqualified if you will, or perhaps best qualified of all, for such a time and country, we entered on the duties, and for our labours received fair pay for those days, though not abundant for the risks to health or life. Living, it appeared, was not expensive in the bush, and a junior's household might comprise a cook, two house-boys and a groom for every horse he kept. These last were cheap, and cost from £4 to £8 according to size and the locality of their purchase. In after years the prices rose with the advent of Europeans and the spread of polo and racing everywhere, and £50 to £100 was often paid for horses which were entered for the local meetings.

The climate, I was told, varied considerably. Down here upon the river it was moist and steamy, with a thermometer between 95° and 105° ; but up in the north the temperature rose much higher, 118° being not uncommon. The heat was much more bearable, however, for the atmosphere was intensely dry, and did not take it out of one like the enervating humidity of the south. The seasons in Northern Nigeria were well defined and regular. May to October covered the rainy period, July and August showing the heaviest fall. Two months of hot weather followed, then three of cold and harmattan wind, when temperature would fall as low as 43° ; and last would come the intense heat, the days when the blue of the sky was veiled with white heat, and a fierce vindictive sun smote down with all his force upon the hard-baked earth and frizzling sand,

boiling down to nothing the very blood in one's veins, drying the marrow in the bone, the very sweat before it left the pores. Hell's foretaste, calorifically at least, on earth.

Such things I learnt, with sundry others not mentioned in the written word, but from the mouths of those I mixed with in Lokoja, of other departments of the Government and their curious ways. Why Jones was so disliked and Smith so popular. How Tom was sick, Dick invalided, and Harry dead, with all the news the place could give, and rumours—generally untrue—of what was happening in the bush. Some good advice and friendly warning, a little chaff and leg-pulling were stirred into the pudding of first impressions, and the whole was flavoured with a spirit of comradeship and helpfulness, always to be found among the makers of a new country such as this. I experienced some of the hitches, natural if stupid, which were the essence of departmental routine. Members of the Treasury who scowled hideously at any mention of a cash advance to take one up country, ravenous for last pay certificates, as though a newcomer would have one; gentlemen in the marine who didn't know when there would be a boat to take me on up river, and counselled patience, rebuking restlessness and offering a cocktail in place of information; the medical officer who was out of quinine and wondered why I had not brought my own; but these things were of small account, serving but to show how Governments are run and how experience may be gained to deal with obstacles.

Lokoja held but the remnants of the old headquarter staffs. They had now moved on to Zungeru, which was to be for the next ten years the capital of the Pro-

tectorate. The Marine Department had its headquarters here, however, and when I came to know a little more about the state of the river fleet of steamers, barges and hired native canoes, the mental capacity of the crews, and the difficulties of navigation, maintenance and running, I realized that Elliot, who commanded the whole business, had no sinecure of a task. Stern-wheelers sank; barges leaked, and were plugged with cement; crews went on strike, or simply refused to work at all; while funds for maintaining the service were cut down to the lowest possible amount. Through all these difficulties officials and stores were clamouring every day to be sent upon their journey at the earliest moment, so that it was little wonder if the "Admiral," as we termed him, sometimes grew a little curt in staving off the importunities of other departments.

Lack of revenue, it soon dawned on me, was the trouble everywhere. A thousand things were crying to be done, a thousand wants were waiting to be satisfied, and there were no funds available. Most of the departments at that time were financially unproductive as it were, and some were costly to maintain. The West African Frontier Force, two battalions, the Northern Nigeria Police, and land and water transport all ate money, while the embryo public works built a few bungalows and stores at a fearful price with imported material. Upon the other hand the revenue from Customs into Northern Nigeria was very small, and we of the political and administrative, a mere handful as it appeared, were only just feeling our way, and beginning to open up the resources to be found in direct taxation of the millions in the north. In later years we were to justify our existence in no uncertain manner both

financially and executively, but these were the cradle years, and the bottles of the departmental babies were poorly filled.

Life seemed a bit precarious, though not more so than was to be expected in the wilds, and deaths amongst us were fairly frequent. I heard how Burney and O'Riordan had been killed across the river, the one outright, the other chased and caught eventually by the pagans, tortured and mutilated till he died. How Stewart, the doctor, had been treated in like fashion behind Onitsha, and of the little that remained of him for burial. I heard of the Satiru disaster far up in Sokoto, where Hilary, the resident, Scott, the assistant resident, and Blackwood of the Mounted Infantry, had all been killed in a fanatic rising, and how Ellis, the doctor, wounded by a spear thrust, and Gosling, the British N.C.O., had managed to escape by the skin of their teeth, chiefly owing to the pluck of certain of the native troopers. Further, I was told how Maloney died in Nassarawa Province, killed by the Magaji of Keffi, who fled and never more was heard of, though by some it was believed that he met his fate at Burmi, in the fighting there. Stories by the score I heard of strange happenings in the bush, of wounds, escapes and all the chances which attend adventure, whether good or bad, and so, well primed with information, I awaited with impatience the time when I should go forward to my province and begin my work.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST TOUR

I STARTED on my journey up the Benue River after waiting five days in Lokoja for my transport. It would take me twenty-three days, I learnt, to get to Amar—my point of disembarkation—in a poling barge. Fowler, of the Police, was to be my companion, and would take the barge still farther up the river to Yola while I rode northwards, another fourteen days, to Bauchi. Upon the Niger bank I stood one hot morning, looking down upon our ship, a white-painted steel barge 45 feet long by 7 feet beam. Fore and aft she was decked to form a stance for polers, and amidships divided into two sunken compartments which were our living quarters, while a third small cubicle contained a kitchen stove. A roof of wooden laths and canvas with hanging screens to protect us from the sun or rain was erected over all, and made of it a comfortable craft enough. Some of our kit was being stowed in the barge, the rest into a large native canoe which would follow us. The headman or captain of the polers sat upon the roof directing operations, and bawling to the porters to take the heavier loads to the canoe; and to one who disregarded him he dealt blows with a heavy paddle, which would have broken any but a black man's head.

The sun is glittering on the water, a faint breeze

blowing across from the Benue mouth. The huge trading canoes come polling down from many a hundred miles up river, laden with onions and other produce from the north, and gently come to rest at the landing-place below us. The beach swarms with natives, porters unloading cargo from an up-river steamer which came in last night, labourers working in the marine shops, market women, and loungers of all sorts. The home-going stern-wheeler lies next to our small vessel. In an hour or two she will be off down stream to Burutu and the ocean boat, bearing with her the mails and some few sick and weary men all longing for the sea. Now all is ready, the loads aboard and crew with poles in hand, and so unnoticed and unspeeded in all that crowd we step aboard the *Egret*, and slip away across the river to the farther side; we dive behind the reedy bank of the Benue channel, which shuts Lokoja from us like a closing door, and are gone upon our journey to the east.

We had eight polers, four in front and four upon the after deck, great strapping fellows of the Nupe tribe, who stood hour after hour upon their feet thrusting the great poles of *tukurua* into the river sand. From dawn to close on sunset they worked steadily each day, with only a couple of half-hour spells to feed. We usually made 15 to 18 miles in the day, but the going was exasperating in its slowness.

A hill upon the river-bank would keep us company for hours, a far-off range remain in sight for days as we wound and twisted up the channel. Each evening we tied up to a sandbank, dining and sleeping out there, if the night were dry and no tornado threatened. The men camped round us, propping their grass mats slantwise around the poles, and slapping themselves incessantly to

kill the tireless mosquitoes, which swarmed in millions as night fell.

Each dawn beheld us swinging out once more into the current, the grey dim banks slowly gliding past, the splash and drag of the punting poles sounding ever in our ears.

Monotony is the keynote of long river travel. The morning freshness, with the sparkle on the river, a clear, clean atmosphere and excursions in search of sport, all these are things to revel in ; but the long, long after-hours, when glaring yellow banks are dancing in the quivering air, and all the world is cowering, stricken by the heat, are apt to drag most tediously to a weary end.

Our gun and rifle gave us a goodly and a varied bag : a fine waterbuck, killed drinking in the earliest light, kob antelope, and reed buck, and every sort of water-fowl, among them spur-wing geese and several kinds of duck and teal, the latter literally in thousands, afforded us fine sport. Crocodiles we shot at in scores, sunning themselves along the water's edge, mostly to lose them, since they always managed, unless paralysed or killed outright, to wriggle into the brown current. The Benue was teeming with fish of all kinds, from the enormous Niger perch which ran to 200 lb. as I was told, down to the common cat-fish, and a bream-like fish full of bones, which 'was impossible eating ; and many of these, chased by some larger enemy, would jump clean into the barge. Once upon a sloping bank we came upon the half of an enormous fish, bitten in two evidently by a crocodile which had chased it through the shallows to the shore—the half weighed over 50 lb., and some of the scales which I kept and dried were as big as a five-shilling piece.

We rammed another monster too, floating just awash, a mass half stunned and sluggish from some blow or wound, which sank as we struck it and moved away below the water. It must have weighed all of 200 lb.

Day after day we poled along, shooting, fishing and in the hot hours dozing in the barge. In the evening I would land and bathe in some pool or quiet reach, not always in comfort or with peace of mind for fear of crocodiles. One such put his head up in a quiet spot as I swam round, and eyed me speculatively, and though he made no effort to go for me I left him in possession, scrambling hastily shorewards. These reptiles do not often attack human beings, I believe. Sometimes they watch the village watering-places and pull an unwary girl in, and I have often known the large ones to take cattle and horses. There is one to-day who waits ever at the Gendenne ferry, far away up the Niger, and takes his toll of animals swimming over behind the canoes; and I know another aged rascal, whom I have frequently tried to get, who haunts Ashaka on the Gongola. Yet I have seen, in some of the smaller rivers, a group of fishermen walking breast-deep along the bottom and plunging down with hand nets to scoop the fish, while right through them floated an ugly snout, which went its way, unheeding the heedless workers, down the stream.

Myself I came to close quarters with one brute as I was bird-shooting upon a sandbank on this very journey. A right and left at whistling teal had brought both birds down, but they fell into the river, where they floated down with the current some yards out. I saw a sand-spit down stream where they would be swept in nearer



ROUGH WATER



HARD POLING

to the shore, and ran to get them there. Wading in I picked up one, the other passing a few feet farther out. Just as I made for him a crocodile put up his head and calmly took my bird almost from under my very hand. He took not the slightest notice of me, and sank from sight again, the while I, who did not know them so well in those days, again made off with haste.

The early season of the rains brought frequent tornadoes, the local term for the storms of wind and rain and lightning which roll up from the north-east, crashing their way overhead with terrific force and speed; and when these threatened our polers usually kept the barge hugging close to shore, for these shallow-draughted, top-heavy craft run serious risk of capsizing if they are caught out on the open river. Accidents were not infrequent, and a year or two after I went up a resident of Yola, poor Barclay, who was going on leave, lost his life, it is believed, in just this way. He was never found again, and the crocodiles, it is certain, took his dead body to their holes beneath the bank.

We, too, were nearly wrecked by a tornado, which came up one day with extraordinary suddenness. The headman thought there was time to get across from the open sandbank, round which we had been crawling for an hour, to the more sheltered shore on the other side. We lumbered off, and of course tornado caught us, racing down with dark wind clouds and muttering thunder. Caught us in the very middle of the stream, the deepest part where poles were useless, and paddles had to be brought into play. It was while the crew were groping for these that the first squall leapt and struck us, and with one sickening lurch we went away down stream, broadside on to the hurricane of wind,

awning screens flapping, boys yelling, ourselves shouting orders which none could hear or try to follow.

The banks were blotted out by the blinding rain which followed on the wind, and on we staggered in the storm-lashed water, utterly out of control, heeling over with each thrust of the howling blast. Suddenly we struck the sloping, half-submerged trunk of some old tree. The crew, as always in an emergency, lost their heads, skipping about like excited monkeys, making futile efforts to push us off. The captain became hysterical with raving impotence, the barge drove half-way up the trunk and then heeled over, the water cascading in over the side. We yelled to them to throw their weight upon the upper side, and both of us stood ready for the jump. There was a moment's tension while we watched which way she would go, then the keel slid back again down the slippery trunk, the barge swung round with head to stream and wind, and there we kept her with the paddles till the wind abated, and we could edge across the still tumbling water to the safety of the bank.

Almost we had lost count of days since we had left Lokoja, as one does in a country where calendars are not and the rising and setting suns follow each other in a wheeling circle of unchange; but on a certain day the headman told us that the morrow would bring my voyage to an end. And so it was, for upon the next dawning we saw a piece of low rising ground some miles away, surrounded by the flat swamp country, and the white tin roof of a solitary bungalow showing up as a landmark far up and down the river, emphasizing to me, as it has always done, the loneliness of European life in Africa. Here I bade farewell to Fowler, the good com-

panion of the river days, and from the shore I watched the *Egret* once again set out upon her crawl towards the upper reaches of the Benue, then took my way up to the station of Amar and the next stage of my journey.

Elphinstone was in charge here, a hospitable and solemn enthusiast in the life and work, who gave me beer and information in equal proportions. He entertained me well, and among other things introduced me to the Provincial Register, a huge tome some 2 feet square, recently thrust upon all provinces, which was to contain all the information possible about everything. I saw many of these books afterwards, some even I have written in myself. Perhaps they served a purpose, even though they slumber now on every office shelf, some full of words and figures, others with sparse entry, poor old relics of bygone efforts or disregard. Only lately I opened one, dirt encrusted and half ravaged by white ants, and scanned its yellow pages, musing half sadly on the enthusiasm which penned the words in the handwriting of those since dead. It spoke to me loudly of our early years, our energies, the difficulties and disappointments of our work, the failure or success of so much endeavour, and so remembering I closed the volume with regret and some affection.

We talked of many things, Elphinstone and I. He gave me information of my road and good advice on travelling. He waxed sarcastic, I believe, over "Howard's lambs," as he called those of us who were to work with the Resident of that name in Bauchi. We were to be well looked after, sent upon our way with comfort and good carriers, even given a flag to ensure our being treated with respect; but it transpired that these not unkindly jibes were caused by some previous forcible

remarks which Bauchi had made upon the methods of administration to be found in Muri.

In two days my caravan was ready, sixty carriers and a small black pony sent by Innes, the doctor at Bauchi, for me to ride. I had added to my staff a cook picked up in Lokoja, and a second servant or "small boy." The first had long since shown me that he could only spoil, not cook, my food, and the second took little interest in anything but the sugar tin. Handed over to my charge were four bales of police equipment, two Northern Nigerian police with a handcuffed murderer, and a Government telegraph clerk named Coker. Mr. Coker was a type as yet unknown to me, a fish rather out of water, speaking a queer language he called English and comically disdainful of the bush people; but on this occasion he proved to be an obliging person, helpful in several ways.

I started off at the end of a hot afternoon to make a short march, by way of settling the carriers to their loads and getting all things shaken down into their proper place, and from then onwards we disappeared into the bush for many days. Marching by stages of 18 to 20 miles a day, we followed a road which lay at first through the low lands of the Benue valley, then over the pleasant higher country to the foot-hills of Bauchi, whence we climbed by stony tracks and passes in the hills up on to the lower Bauchi plateau. Save for the town of Wase, a Fulani settlement, all the villages we passed were of the pagans from the riverain and hill tribes. At midday or soon after we would camp at one of these and obtain water and supplies. Eggs and chickens, both diminutive, a little goat's milk or a few onions, were all that I could get from the surly villagers, who were both

shy and suspicious, and though not openly truculent seemed little inclined to put themselves out for strangers. These supplies almost literally had no price. An empty cigarette tin, a pinch of European salt, or a piece of cloth were much prized, and in addition I paid in cowrie shells five hundred for fifteen or twenty eggs, one hundred for a small bowl of milk, and so forth. The exchange value of the cowrie was fixed by the Government at that time at two thousand to the shilling, so the expenditure was not lavish.

My carriers did not help to pacify the villagers or increase their confidence. A rowdy crew of scallywags, some Hausas, some pagans, who sized me up as new to the country, unable to speak Hausa and so unlikely to hear of their misdoings, they bullied and pilfered from the local inhabitants whenever they could. Early in the journey I had to inquire into the complaint of a voluble old lady who prostrated herself at my tent door with many shrill cries, and, as I learnt, deplored the loss of her best calabash filched from her by one of the men. The Court (myself) took prompt action. Upon a box of condensed milk I sat, with Mr. Coker and a Hausa speaking villager acting as interpreters. The carriers are assembled under the headman and a policeman. With renewed outcry and extravagant gesture the plaintiff picks out the culprit, a short, stocky little Hausa man with only one eye. The calabash is produced, a sullen admission is dragged from the rascal, and in a silence broken only by the mutterings and exclamations of the crone, his sentence is awarded, twelve hearty strokes well laid on by the senior policeman, who is delighted to be the agent of authority. The *pièce de conviction* is restored to the plaintiff dame, and all but the culprit

are satisfied. An interested spectator is the handcuffed murderer, who has no wish to be left out of the fun.

At the town of Wase—which I reached on the sixth day—there stood a remarkable pillar of rock, visible for many miles round. Sheer up from the farm land at its foot it rose for 600 feet or more, its flat top whitened like a tablecloth with the droppings of countless birds, the vultures, pelicans, white-breasted crows and others who were its only visitants. The smooth grey sides gave no sign of hand- or foothold other than the smallest cracks and excrescences of weather action, and on them nothing grew. Solemn, grand and inaccessible it towered up, a gloomy watcher o'er the surrounding bush, a silent guardian of the town. A curious story of this pillar was told me later by the chief, who saw the happening. At one time, before the British Government came and laid the boundaries of all the provinces, the rock and all the country round belonged to the Emir of Bauchi, by whom, and indeed by all, the pillar was believed to be unclimbable. There came a day when in the Emir's gaol there lay two murderers condemned by him to die, and interested to prove whether this great mass could be climbed or not the Emir offered them their lives if they should scale it. Eager for reprieve, they volunteered to try, and so were brought from Bauchi for the purpose. The Ajia of Bauchi took them to the foot and set them to their work. One of them crawled half-way up, then dropped like a falling lizard and lay dead and broken at the bottom. The other actually succeeded in getting to the top, but there, unable to face the awful descent, went mad from thirst or fright or both, and his bones or dust lie there

to this day, for all we know, since none have ever climbed to see.

I can picture it all so well in my mind. I see the crowd of sightseers at the base of that huge pillar, come out to see the trial ; the great rock rising, white-capped, up into the blue, perhaps a hawk or two dipping and floating round the summit. I see the two men stripped of all but their loin cloth, led up to the stark face, and told to start. Death's horror behind, the faintest hope of life before, urge them to that desperate endeavour, that almost hopeless task. I see them start to climb, and soon great beads of sweat well out upon their bodies as they strain and cling and haul themselves up the almost seamless rock. The sun pours mercilessly down upon their anguished forms, the stone is heated like a furnace. I hear the murmurs of the watching crowd, its jeers and plaudits. The minutes pass, and both are high up on that blind and cruel face. Comes then the moment when human strength gives out. The nerveless fingers slip from the last clutching hold, a body flashes down the face into eternity. The watchers stir, and mutter one to the other "Wallahi," "he is dead," "his day is finished," and then all eyes are turned once more to his companion. Excitement rises high, while shouts of admiration and encouragement reach up to him there. Slowly he crawls upwards, every inch a separate agony — a last few feet — then almost fainting he grasps some small projection and draws himself across the edge, to lie there panting and collapsed. Too soon perhaps he wakes to the awful knowledge that he can never face the long journey back, and after many a despairing search to find some easier way he gives it up.

Horror comes down upon his soul, with madness to his brain, and mercifully, as we may hope, death stayed not long in coming.

Some miles beyond Wase we struck the first hills of Bauchi, and rising hour by hour above the plain looked back from a high pass upon the endless bush through which we had been travelling. Mile upon mile it rolled away into the far haze, a vast rich carpet of greens and browns flecked here and there with lighter spots, which showed the village clearings and the farms just faintly verdant with the young grain. The going became hard and stony to our feet, and much of the way I led the small black pony, who had plodded manfully so far along the road. Three days of this uneasy travelling, through the broken country which lies some 2000 feet above sea-level, brought me to a more pleasant road which wound for miles along the valleys, and with two more stages we emerged into the Bauchi plain. From a last eminence I saw the high earth walls of Bauchi town shining red in the morning sun, curving away in a long oblong shape to enclose the city and its urban farms, and pressing forward along a foot track which skirted the town for a mile or two turned off over a piece of marshy ground and reached my journey's end. And what an end! From the grey drizzle of the Mersey I had come 5000 miles by land and water to find a little group of mud-built huts set haphazard in the bush, with beaten foot-tracks leading from one to the other. One of them more imposing than the rest I made for and found to be the Resident's office, his court-house, and the police office, each a small room of 10 feet square. Behind it the Resident's house, oblong in shape, but smaller, dwarfed three or four circular huts some

15 feet in diameter, which I was to learn were the European quarters.

A fort (so named), a gaol and storehouse made up the total of as queer a collection of habitations as I had ever seen in all my wanderings; and truly it needed the Union Jack drooping idly from a bush pole before the office door to make one believe that this was my headquarters station. Everything above ground was built of the earth upon which it stood, and thatched with the tall rank grass which grew everywhere close at hand. I have stabled my horses since those days in houses infinitely better than the one I first occupied when I got to Bauchi, and revisiting that old site after many years I have smiled over the ruins as they are to-day and tried to trace among the earth-heaps or half-standing walls the compounds where we sat at evening, the very paths we trod, conjuring up the faces of the men who lived there, and memories of the spirit of that time—a time when we were young and strong and laughed at everything, caring little for discomfort or ill-health.

The Honourable Oliver Howard was at that time the Resident of the province. His early death, some two years later, removed from the Nigerian staff a fine administrator and a great personality. Tall and spare, remarkably good-looking, his was a strong and fearless character, and of his ability there is much written record in Nigeria. He was essentially a pioneer, progressive and perhaps high-handed; and if headquarters did not always see eye to eye with him in all he did, his vigorous policy of those days did very much to establish, and establish early, a real security in what was probably the most lawless province in the whole Protectorate at

that time. There were over forty different pagan tribes, some of them unconquered even by the Fulani who had striven to overpower them for a hundred years, and all were ready to fight at a moment's notice. They would have nothing to do with us, the newcomers, would obey no summons and take no orders, and refused most definitely to come into line at all.

Even among the Fulani and their adherents ill-will was widely prevalent. Bauchi had put up no fight against the coming of the British troops, the healthy fight that always clears the air, and so their sullen submission had bred a festering sore which menaced strongly all chance of peace and quiet.

Only a week or so before I arrived a wandering preacher of the Moslem faith had spoken earnestly in the town, urging the inhabitants with passionate zeal to rise against the Christians in Jihad, and slay the dogs who had seized their country and brought them thus to shame. This farrago of nonsense had been poured into most willing ears, and the danger of a rising and an attempt to exterminate the handful in the station became a real one. The trouble was discovered through the uneasy attitude of the troops, who were loyal to us but much disturbed by rumours in the town; the sedition-monger was arrested under the noses of the townspeople, all armed and ready to rise, and he was tried, at Howard's request, by the Emir of Bauchi and his council of advisers. The sitting lasted all day, the majority of the council being opposed to sentencing the prisoner to death. Eventually they came to the conclusion of that necessity, and his execution was ordered. The man was hanged at once from the roof of the courthouse, in the light of an enormous bonfire of blazing

spears and bows and other armament collected from the town. The Governor's assent to this execution was asked for and obtained after the event and not before; but these were precarious days, and it was touch and go between a rising of the Moslems and a peaceful settlement of the whole affair. Every action of ours was watched from hour to hour, and delay would have been disastrous. I know the memory of that night's doings, watched by hundreds of the townspeople, remains to-day in Bauchi as fresh as ever, and will do so while those who saw it live.

Howard had but two junior political officers to help him in the whole province, Francis and myself, and the area to supervise was over 25,000 square miles of country, with a population guessed at then to be about 500,000. We had one company of the 1st Battalion Nigeria Regiment at Bauchi, another of the 2nd at Nafada in the Gombe district, and a small mountain gun. In addition there were some seventy police. Mackworth the gunner, Rennie and Uniacke of the infantry, Dene of the police, and Innes the doctor, with two British N.C.O.'s, made up our complement of Europeans. The force was a strong one, but very necessary for the work we had to do, and did most thoroughly, and to-day you shall find no troops in all that province, only police in the tin-mining area of the plateau, and treasury guards in the outer districts. The necessity for armed force has practically ceased, and Europeans now may wander where they will among every tribe, except in one small corner of the Kaliri tribe, whose country is not quite ready for safe tin prospecting. Two days after my arrival Howard left Bauchi on one of his expeditions. He told me to pick up all I could of office routine and

knowledge of administrative work, and pick it up quickly, and that on his return he would send me to the Gombe district. He gave me £50 of Government cash for ordinary expenses of the office, informed me he had no interpreter to spare, and that I must struggle on as best I could, Dene helping me, and, wishing me luck, departed with the troops on a six weeks' absence.

My knowledge of Hausa was fragmentary, and of the other work was nil, but I quickly got hold of scraps of both. They were days when necessity drove, and drove hard.

Mistakes, muddles, and miscarriages of justice there were in plenty, as was natural. As commissioner of the Provincial Court, armed with fortunately the smallest powers, I awarded sundry punishments which possibly did not fit the offence in all cases; but my efforts were subject to superior revision, and little harm resulted in the end. If they exist to-day, what tokens of my fogged and laboured attempts there must be in the erased and blotted entries in the old Court minute-book, what records of anxious poring over the Nigerian laws. The revenue account books, too, could tell a tale of entries and mis-entries, of sacks of cowries wrongly counted, and totals disagreeing. These were the earliest struggles though, and in a few weeks I began to get a grasp—learning the system on which we worked, our use of the native channels of administration, the methods of taxation, and the hundred problems which each day would bring.

Meanwhile my quarters were established in one of the round huts, my servants in three smaller ones, and my horse, a purchase from Howard, in another. It was a real bush life we led, void of much comfort and with

little time for ease. My furniture consisted of a camp bed, small wooden table, long canvas chair, and a small folding one. I had a canvas folding bath and washing basin, a heavy square lantern, called a "Lord's lamp," and a square of rubber ground sheet, and that was all. Round the circular wall of my hut were ranged my uniform cases, gun cases, boxes of provisions, etc., and in what space was left I lived and ate and slept. The only light came from the two open doorways. The roof rising to a point in the centre was formed of a framework of guinea-corn stalks, covered with a thatch of bush grass, and though supposed to be rain and sun-proof, was neither in effect. The white ants swarmed up through the floor and walls, eating their patient way into everything but iron or glass, while snake and lizard made the house their own. Camp life it was, and had its own discomforts, but we laughed at them, as indeed one may if health and strength be one's companions.

A burglar paid me a visit a few nights after I had settled in. Always a light sleeper, I awoke for no apparent cause. It was pitch dark, with the blue starlit night just faintly framed in the open doorway of my hut. For a few moments I lay sleepily watching it, when quite suddenly I saw close to the wall a tiny spark. At first it was perfectly still, a pin-point of dull light against the black, but in a little it began to wave quickly back and forth and in small circles, and was brought down close to the floor, where I saw a faint reflection in the polished side of a uniform case. Softly I drew my revolver from my pillow, gently raised the mosquito-net—and stepped on to my lantern, which stood on the floor by my bed. The crash of it overturning alarmed

the intruder, and I saw a figure leap through the doorway out into the night, and dashing after him, fired twice at a dim blur which quickly faded into the night. No corpse was found next day, nor any blood marks, but my hut was left strictly alone after that. These night-thieves are very quiet and cunning, moving like cats in the dark and just as soundlessly. They carry with them stalks of grass just smouldering at the tip, and these they fan into a glow by waving rapidly to and fro, and so get sufficient light for their purpose to remove what takes their fancy.

Our relaxation in the evenings on the station was mainly shooting. Guinea-fowl, bush fowl, sand-grouse and quail were to be found in plenty, and good bags were got by every one. Thereafter we would forgather at alternate houses, to smoke and yarn over our drinks, or at some well-intentioned dinner devour the curious food which all our cooks unvaryingly served alike, to the ruin of digestion. I like to look back on those good days, the interest and freshness of the life and work, the good companionship, and the freedom of it all; and though malaria, sun and all climatic troubles had their way with us in turn, they were the golden days, and none of us regret them.

A few weeks later I left for Gombe, which was to be under my sole charge, and where I should be alone. The heavy rains were on now, and all the country ran with water, streaming in every gully, filling every river with torrential flood. Knee-deep in mud upon the low-lying tracts, wading through the marsh water, swimming every swollen river, I spent five strenuous days, rarely dry for two hours together, and on the sixth rode into my little station, just as a flaming sun was sinking behind

some angry clouds which gave promise of another night of deluge and wild storm.

From now on for many months I was to be entirely alone. With the exception of an officer in charge of the troops at Nafada, some 50 miles from Gombe, whom I visited twice for the space of twenty-four hours, I saw no other white face during the ten months I was in the district. I did not find it lonely. There was so much to be done, and the work was so varied and continuous, that the spare hours were few and I needed no other companion than my thoughts. Natures differ widely in their ability to endure solitude. I never found it a hardship to be alone in those early days, for there was so much to be done, I was so constantly on the move, and the people and the country were so new and interesting that I did not feel the need of European companionship.

Some men are more gregarious by nature than others, and really need one of their own race to discuss ideas and thoughts with them, and if they are left too much alone they suffer in their health and well-being. It is a question entirely of how they are constituted.

Nowadays, when life is more settled in its routine groove and there is no longer the distraction of the unknown, I should not care to be so utterly alone as I was during my first tour.

I was in for a strenuous tour. My district consisted of the Fulani Emirate of Gombe, and the country of the pagan Tangales lying to the south, in all an area of some 10,000 square miles. The number of the population was but roughly guessed at, and the geography was scappily put upon the map—and often misleading. The Emirate was ruled by Umaru, Emir of Gombe, with his district chiefs, under my supervision, or at-

tempted supervision one might call it at the beginning, while the pagans' country was inhabited by half a dozen tribes each under their own chief, all fighting and raiding each other and quite unamenable to discipline. Elsewhere I shall tell more of these people and my visits to them. In the Emirate itself the most important work lay near to hand, and it was shouting to be done. The town of Burmi had been the scene of a notable fight put up by the Gombe Fulani under the fanatic Mallam Geni against the British advance. The man had gathered round him not only the Gombe people, but malcontents from other quarters, among them the deposed Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, Attahiru, and many others who had fled from justice or punishment at the hands of the oncoming troops. The battle had not lasted long, but was sharp while it lasted and ended decisively. Attahiru and many others were killed, while the British had some casualties, notably Major Marsh, who was killed by a poisoned arrow. Burmi was razed to the ground, and the Fulani of Gombe, outwardly chastened, returned to their villages. They were, however, a passively resisting lot, and much had to be done in the way of handling their disgruntled tempers and bringing them into line.

About one hundred and fifty villages were known and roughly located, and these paid a nominal tax to their Emir, collected with much difficulty. Many others were to be discovered and put upon the map, taxes equitably assessed and collected, and a vast amount of information to be procured as to population, history, local customs and resources both of the Fulani and of the Bolewa and Teri semi-pagan tribes who also inhabited the district. The organization of this work, together

with supervision of native courts, prisons and police, collection of cattle tax, caravan tolls (which were soon after abolished), and Provincial Court prosecutions formed the chief part of my work during that tour. To assist me I had an interpreter, three Government paid messengers, and six police who acted as escort and treasury guard, and members of the Emir's staff when I required them. Truly we worked hard in those days, and if reports were hurried and ill-written, and cash books did not always balance, much was to be forgiven, for we all worked more in the field than in the office ; indeed, I was hardly ever in my station for more than a day or two at a time, and during my ten months I was on the march for two hundred and seventy days, and covered well over 3000 miles on horseback.

I soon discarded my interpreter. Even before I was sufficiently confident to carry on by myself I found him out in wilful mistranslations and much other rascality, so he departed to Bauchi and troubled me no more ; and though his absence for a time added greatly to my labours, yet I learned more Hausa in a week than in ever a month before. I realize, now that I know a little better the African and his ways, how closely in those days every action of mine must have been watched by them, what speculation there was among them as to how much I could be taken in or misled by their intrigues and wiles. How far could roguery and extortion be carried on, as it were, under my very nose ? How far was I to be deceived by the soft-tongued ones, currying favour for their own ends ? From the old Emir himself, with his letter of appointment from the High Commissioner, buying and selling slaves in disobedience of the Slavery Ordinance, down to my grooms who tried to steal my ponies' corn,

right through all the social grades, each and every man was leagued in fellowship against myself, the inexperienced, solitary stranger who was fair sport to them. "Deceive him," was the cry, "put him off the track, bamboozle him!" 'Twas a great game, and they were expert players at it.

Much there was to learn, much to punish, something to pardon to those childish rascals. A little progress here, a set-back there, one day some self-congratulation, on the morrow disillusion, or disheartening failure. In Nigeria to-day, with larger staff, a larger progress in some things is being made; but that small handful of us who lived so widely scattered in the early times will remember still the difficulties which we had to contend with, and wonder perhaps that we did so much.

Incidents were many in the marches to and fro across the district. Heavy, weary hours plunging through miles of swamp, long forced marches in waterless stretches, rounding up of cattle driven helter-skelter off into the bush by their owners to avoid a proper counting of the herds. Sometimes a grass shelter blown down by storm, sometimes burnt out by fire, the work of some angry rascal. Once the entire treasury of some £200 was lost for an hour at the bottom of a stream. Carried in a tin box upon a carrier's head it fell into the water's rush, and I had to dive and dive again constantly till I laid my hands upon it, half covered by the sandy mud. Another time my small supply of stationery was lost in crossing the Gongola River and never recovered, and my reports and letters were written with a pencil stub upon the paper coverings of provision tins for many days after. There were some amusing captures made of highway robbers who infested the roads in those days. Some I got

by rounding up a located village haunt at night, pulling them sleep-stupefied out of their hut ; others we lay in wait for at a given time, and collared on the road.

Long before dawn in the hot weather I would be in the saddle, visiting villages, counting populations, hearing complaints, and making inquiries into cases of all sorts. Constantly on the move, I covered an immense amount of ground, and towards the end had a varied collection of facts and figures to record, results of weeks of trekking.

I was sent on sick leave earlier than I wished, but my health began to fail. Living was hard, food indifferent, and exposure to sun and rain told on me severely. I had had a good deal of malaria, and much as I disliked having to do so I obeyed Howard's orders and went in to Bauchi, carried on a native bed ; for I was too weak to ride. There the Medical Officer dosed me soundly with quinine and other drugs, and ten days later I set off with Howard—who was also going on leave—down towards the Benue River once again, and so sailed homewards in May of 1907, a year after I had landed at Burutu.

CHAPTER III

NATIVE ADMINISTRATION

OUR early efforts to administer the great Mohammedan provinces of the north were not undertaken as something new or strange to the races we had conquered.

A foundation was there, an excellent foundation based on the Moslem code and suitable in almost every way to the people's needs, and it is not too much to say that had the system maintained the aims of its inception we should have found little enough to check or alter in it. Unhappily, as I shall show, the system had decayed and rotted to an intolerable degree and had become a leprous thing, a hollow sham. We who have worked among these people cannot blame them altogether for their lapses.

From a standpoint of European superiority it is easy enough to look with horror upon the abuses which we found, but let it be remembered that had our northern races laboured for so long as Nigerian races have done under the disadvantages of a lack of education in its best sense—which is the moral one—they too might have been weltering in the same slough, and equally required to be set on firmer ground.

Understanding brings forgiveness always, and so it is that tolerance works hand in hand with firmness in all

our efforts to raise Nigeria to the level which we hope to see it reach.

The nineteenth century dawning over the country found it inhabited by a varied collection of races and tribes, the occupants for centuries of what we first called Northern Nigeria. First there were a race of Hausa-speaking people, possibly of Hamitic origin, who dwelt in the "Hausa bokoi," the Seven States, which included Guber, Kano, Katsina, Daura and Zaria, together with what were known as the "bokoi banza," the seven secondary areas. These people were great travellers and traders, even in a country where all are commercial in their nature. Ruled by their powerful chiefs, they possessed a civilization which, even a thousand years ago, must have been favourably comparable to that of Europe at that date, and perhaps half of them had embraced Islam, although it cannot be said that they were at any time fanatic or zealous in that faith.

Next, there were the Kanuri of Bornu with their co-inhabitants, the Kanembu, who are merged now in the former race. These people were converted to Islam in the eleventh century, and were and are the most stoutly professing Mohammedans of all that part to-day. It is said that Al Azhar University in Cairo named them on its roll as one of the racial division of students who attended there, and I myself, when previously in Morocco, had there heard of the people of Bornu alone of all Nigeria.

Scattered over the rest of the land were innumerable pagan tribes, more than three hundred, some powerful in numbers and strength, others comparatively small

communities, speaking with different tongues and mostly at enmity with each other.

Among all these there lived and roamed the pastoral race, the Fulani. From Timbuctu to Yola, from Darfur to Senegal, these cattle herders and nomad farmers were to be found, settling for a time and thereafter moving on to other fields, a hardy and a warlike race.

Their origin, it would seem, is still uncertain, but I can believe that they might be of the Berber stock, for I have seen something of their counterpart among the Barbar of North Africa. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries they are heard of in the great kingdom of Songhay, always fighting, sometimes in defeat, sometimes as conquerors, but little by little growing in power. They came in 1650 into Hausaland, spreading abroad over the country and there remaining in comparative peace until the end of 1800. As teachers of the Moslem faith, religious chiefs, their power grew greater still among the half-Mohammedan Hausas and the Habe (non-Moslems), and about that time the Chief of Gobir, alarmed at their growing ascendancy, sent for Chief Othman dan Fodio and others of his kin and rated them severely for their arrogant behaviour. An injudicious step this proved to be, for Shehu Othman raised his standard in revolt; the Fulani joined him in their thousands, and a battle followed in which the Gobirawa were defeated utterly.

This was the beginning of a far-reaching campaign, in which the Shehu, making Sokoto his headquarters, bestowed upon his supporting chiefs religious flags and bade them carry the sword of Islam to every corner of the land. So for a hundred years the Fulani fought and ruled over Hausaland and far beyond it, and nearly

all the provinces, as we made them later, were governed by Fulani Emirs, the descendants of those earlier fanatic warriors. Bornu remained unconquered by them, and some hardy pagan tribes who fled to hill or forest resisted to the end the Fulani attacks, nor ever owned allegiance to the conquerors.

They were plucky warlike men, those early bearers of the faith's flag, one must believe. From war camps and defeated towns they set out unceasingly to fight. Some were killed, others died while their wars were still unended. Often they were defeated and left the field in disordered retreat, only to return once more to victory; and their history is full of stories of bloody battles and a death roll on either side, frequently exaggerated, but telling plainly of their strenuous life.

In the lifetime of Othman dan Fodio and of his son Bello, who succeeded him, the Fulani Empire was kept well together in all its height of power and success. Shehu Othman was a deeply religious head, a personality which may well stand out in African history. Temporal power meant nothing to him except in so far as it strengthened the true faith.

His advice and warning to all was that they take no heed of the things of this world, nor struggle ambitiously to further their own ends, but rather live humbly and give their thoughts to the hereafter—the old, old advice of all religions, which so few of any nation, black or white, find easy to obey. His dress was of the poorest herdsman; he put on no fine embroidered gowns or haughty turbans, nor splendid shoes; and even to this day the Sarkin Musulmi, Chief of Sokoto, wears a plain gown and modest turban as a sign and memory of asceticism for the faith.

Yet this is now the only sign, and soon after the deaths of Othman and Bello the glory of Fulani rule broke down and then became misrule in all its branches. While the Fulani in the country remained much as they had always been, living a simple, hardy life, pasturing their cattle and tending their farms, the chiefs and dwellers in the towns as the years went on grew more and more self-indulgent and effete. They married widely among the races they had dominated, and the half-bred offspring deteriorated in successive generations. They raided the territories under their hand for slaves and loot, and by the very force of their example imbued the natives, who suffered at their hands, with a like desire to act with equal rapacity when the chance occurred.

Umaru "Nagwamache," nicknamed the Destroyer, the Emir of Kontagora, so ravaged that country for slaves and all he could capture for gain, that to-day the bush is empty of all but ruined towns and villages, save only the few he spared or we have built up since.

Upon the conquered races, too, the Fulani imposed the Koranic tithes which, though reasonable and justifiable in inception, became with the passing years affected by the canker of abuse, just so many channels to enrich the decadent, rapacious overlords, and in the end the whole wide empire under the Fulani sway, like some tall ant-hill shining red and solid in the sun, was honey-combed and rotten with the evil influences of its masters and so fell crumbling to the thrust of British arms, a sorry spectacle for all its former grandeur to the eye.

Such, then, was the position when we surveyed the material on which we were to work, the instruments to

our hand and the Augean stable of filth to be made clean. This brief historical description of the country shows how the Fulani came to be its rulers; but something I must tell of the methods employed by the descendants of those early warriors to administer, if so we can term it, the fine country upon which they had placed their heel. Did the old Shehu, I wonder, roaming in Paradise, look down on that poor relic of his fervid efforts for the faith and mourn its sorry end? I think his last years on earth must have been embittered by the signs of coming lapse from the straight path of righteousness, for he knew his people and their failings well enough—and his last years were given up to smoothing quarrels. There is a native prophecy which tells that the Fulani would rule one hundred years; then would come others for a hundred years, who too should pass away. Shall what is foretold come true in full as it has in part? Will the Messiah come then, or we give up Nigeria to be governed by itself? “Allah iaraf,” as the Arabs say, leaving it with calm complacency to Him.

As heads of the machine which we had to set going again on proper lines, there were the paramount chiefs, or Emirs, and around them were their minor chiefs and office-holders, each with a title such as Waziri, Galadima, Madaiki, Sarkin Yaiki, Wombai, Mijindadi, Sarkin Yara and a host of others. These men had certain duties, chiefly consisting of war and raiding, or collecting the taxes from the large slices of territory which the paramount chief had awarded them. They in turn had scores of hangers-on, again with titles, some the same as their seniors but of minor importance, so that you would find the Galadima of the Sarkin Yaiki or the Mijindadi of the Wombai. These were, indeed, the

"lesser fleas upon their backs to bite 'em"; parasites with titles of every letter in the alphabet, descending lower and lower in the social scale till some even wore tattered garments or went shoeless. Everybody's aim was to have a title to enable him to extort the more, and their welfare depended on their opportunity.

The grave and reverent rascals at the top had got tired of warfare, and become lazy and luxurious, and the hardest work they cared to do was to prance bravely on their horses decked in circus array before the Emir, to escort him on a gentle ride around the city walls, or salute him in the *jafi* in which they galloped up one by one surrounded by the "fleas" and shook their hands in dignified greeting to their overlord. Their other pastimes were to haunt their noble houses, eat heartily, amass slaves and concubines, and listen to the lies or praise of their surrounders. It might be thought that they would have preferred to remain upon the lands which had been given to them, to increase their opportunities upon the spot for harrying their peasantry, grabbing all they could, and living on the fat of the land. But this they dared not do. Holding as they did their country merely by the Emir's will, these territorial chiefs cared not to leave the capital for long for fear that some detractors might prevail with the Emir, causing them to be hurled from their position, and so usurp their place. Nor did the paramount lord desire them to be absent too much, lest they should become too great a menace to his authority.

In fact, the court life was lived in an atmosphere of suspicion and endless intrigue from the highest chief to the lowest servant who crawled to do his bidding. Their plan and custom, then, was to place a

lieutenant outside to do the rapacious work, and themselves remain at hand to be the *kofa* (door) through which the proceeds of their robbery—called tithe—should reach the Emir's hands. In reality that door was three-quarters closed, and only a small proportion squeezed its way into the Chief's storerooms by that channel. An alternative method was to send their trusty (!) tax-gatherers out direct to clutch all they could lay hands on and bring it in. Whether by means of one agent or the other, the whole process was carried out with the most artistic thoroughness of extortionate effect. First, there was the legitimate *zakka* or tenth of produce to collect. A village of a hundred adult farmers might reap in all five thousand bundles of guinea-corn and millet from their sowing. Five hundred bundles were due to be paid in grain or sometimes cowrie value, and the course of that five hundred from the village to the Emir was a precarious one.

The Jekada—tax-gatherer—sat down comfortably in the best house in the village. Time was no great object, for he lived entirely at the villagers' expense and received presents of all sorts in the meantime. In due course the tithe was brought, and then began the rascally apportioning of the grain. The village chief had a few bundles, according to the hospitality he had shown the Jekada. The latter abstracted his own share and brought the balance to the deputy, who again put his greedy fingers in the pie. Once more the balance passed on its way to the fief holder in the city, who, with scores of hangers-on and his own household to support, took a large share and the small remainder was taken to the Emir's palace. Presently the Emir would demand a further supply, knowing well where the shortage had gone, and so the *kofa*, under

pressure from his overlord, sent forth his hyenas once again to gather more. Perhaps they still had other lawful sources to tap, the tax on crafts, the weavers, dyers, blacksmiths, the leather workers, tailors, shoemakers, or the butchers, brokers and small traders, each class represented by their chief of the industry, who stuck to some of it and handed on the balance to the Jekada. Or there were the taxes on special crops to be collected on the cassava, onions, rice, the indigo, henna and the cotton, or those on live stock, and thus when these had been collected, the pressure was slackened for a time.

It would not be long, however, before the hungry maws of Emir, office-holder, and various grades downwards required to be satisfied again, and then the business of extortion would begin in earnest. According to the rapacity of the chief and energy of his agents the peasantry were pillaged ruthlessly, mulcted in some cases of all they possessed. Stories are legion of the methods which were adopted, the bullying and cruel disregard of genuine claims to poverty, and failing all possible expedients of "might is right," the farcical ideas which came to the Jekada to squeeze out more from a dry stone. I like the tale of Gujba in Bornu, though this is not attributable to Fulani rule, but to one of an equal severity. The Kanuri, as I have said, resisted always the Fulani attacks, but in the end succumbed to the sword and rifle of a later pillager, one Rabeh of the Baghirmi who came upon them from the north-east, and whose followers, armed with guns, ravaged the country at their will.

Rabeh's tax-gatherer with fifty horsemen came down to Gujba, a flourishing village in the south-east of the



JFKADAS

country. He demanded and was paid five hundred Maria Theresa dollars, which were common coin in Bornu then. Well fed and tended as he was, it was yet some days before he declared his intention of leaving, and in that time he had amassed another two hundred dollars upon one pretext or another. Finally, he left in the dark of an early morning, and I picture the relief of the drowsing villagers as they heard the horses' feet clattering along the narrow alleys of the reed-fenced compounds. Day broke and found him once more at the gate, for he had barely reached the Anzai swamp, 4 miles away, when his rapacious heart misgave him at leaving Gujba with so little snatched from its trembling people. Simulating intense displeasure he informed the village chief that, as he left that morning, a cock had crowed derisively at him. Cocks were not allowed to crow like that at Rabeh's men, and that early bird's exhortation would cost the village, as a lesson, another hundred dollars—which it did !

The Emirs had plenty of other means of enriching themselves : large sums were paid for fishing rights and iron smelting, and quantities of the products were supplied to them. Ferries, too, were a fruitful source of revenue, the proceeds sticking to many palms before the balance reached them. Hunters supplied them with tusks of elephants killed, and other game, lion and leopard skins. Every caravan of traders passing through an Emir's country had to pay its toll of goods, large or small according to its size, and to the cuteness of its *madugu*, or leader, in escaping too great a levy. Sometimes, when hard put to it, the Emirs would have authorized gangs of robbers stationed to pillage the single traders passing with their load. Also

they had revenue in bags of cowries paid for the gift of a village or town chiefship, with additional *douceurs* from several hopeful candidates, and bribes to remit a threatened punishment. The office-holders in a minor degree shared in these methods of gaining wealth, and even in the later days of our régime a big office-holder of Kano was proved to have made £2000 in one year, by payments made to gain the headships of various towns in his large district.

Indeed, the whole personnel of this mass of corruption, misnamed an administration, was saturated through and through with one common desire to oppress and rob the weaker. Even among the aborigines of the country, in whom the natural tendency of the African to copy his masters, and the slackness of a moral sense, is always present, the fashion grew to join in these schemes of extortion, until those of the peasantry who gained some small authority began with one accord to emulate their rulers, differing from them only in degree of opportunity. Bornu also did not escape the disease of depravity, and it was only the virile, still unconquered, pagans of the hills who upheld a code and standard of their own, more savage if you will, but less disgusting than the state of wretched oppression which existed on the plains below.

The courts in which the Moslem law was administered were equally hotbeds of intrigue and bribery. The code itself was admirable, well suited to the people. and in most cases, I believe, was followed quite faithfully by the Alkalai who sat in judgment. Some fined far too heavily, accepted too frequently the *pansa*, i.e. ransom money paid in lieu of flogging, and occasionally took bribes; but on the whole the Alkalai, dignified by the

profession of law and justice, conducted themselves more honourably than all others. But it was in the purlieus of the courts that the same fine old spirit of grab and get-all-you-can was exhibited at its best. Ushers of the court, messengers sent to summon witnesses, door-keepers, and lesser *maallams* thronged the courtyard, cajoling, promising, threatening the plaintiffs and defendants, accepting or forcing from the litigants and their witnesses bribes or hush money, and he who paid the most would generally win his case, by aid of hastily concocted evidence, or by some wile of the loathsome parasites who fattened on all comers.

The administration of justice was also hampered tremendously by a lazy, ravenous, gambling class of ruffians, the *dogarai*, police of sorts, whose functions other than that of arresting and guarding wrongdoers, consisted in robbing, bullying and extorting from all those with whom they came in contact, and in virtue of their office making themselves a terror to the populace. Prison life exceeded in ghastliness all one's imagination, and nothing in the Middle Ages could have been more horrible.

The prison of Kano, after the taking of the city, was described in official reports which read like fiction, but its state was certainly not exaggerated. I have seen many of the early prisons, with their tiny entrance doors and cramped space. Condemned murderers were placed upon the floor, their legs protruding through holes bored in the prison wall, and shackled outside with roughly made irons. If the gaol was full these wretches were stamped on and crushed out of life, or left there till starvation ended them. I have seen a room, 8 feet by 8 feet, in which some forty men were said to have been

interned. It was 8 feet high, had no hole for light or air, and its stench was too terrible to speak of. Another which I saw at Potiskum was actually below the ground, with an entrance hole too small for me to lower myself into with comfort. The feeding of prisoners was a matter of indifference and many starved, while the death-rate from different causes was enormous.

Offenders were secured on the way into the city by methods which did not lack ingenuity. Ordinary cases had the right hand tied up short to the neck, a position which deprived them of much free movement. I have tried it on myself, and realized how greatly it hinders one's action. Felons had their necks placed in a forked log, through the ends of which an iron staple ran, the log itself, weighing many pounds, being carried by the prisoner. They never escaped when so shackled.

Punishments were barbarous in the extreme. Mutilation, the lopping off of hands and feet for repeated stealing, impalement on long sharp stakes of wood—the sufferers sometimes living for two days or more before their release in death—burying alive and stoning. Yet these were the punishments common to all Moslem countries which were ruled by autocratic government. In 1902 at Fez in Morocco, the Bab Mhrok, one of the city's gates, had its weekly garniture of fresh-lopped heads, as my own eyes have seen, and scores of men were wandering in the markets whose hands were shapeless lumps, caused by the palms and fingers being gashed, pressed close together, and bound with green cowhide until the flesh had grown into one mass. This for petty pilfering.

Executions under Fulani rule were not pretty sights. Under the code a murderer—once convicted—was

condemned to die, as far as possible, by the instrument he had used upon his victim. Usually the sword was employed as representing the iron of the common weapon, the knife or the spear, but sometimes the throat was cut with a knife, like the killing of a sheep or bullock. If the sword were used, the man might be killed upon the road from prison to the destined spot of execution. I have had this method described to me. The man walked between two *dogarai*, with corded hands, while behind him strode the Chief of all the *dogarai*. At a given moment, the latter would quietly draw his sword from its gaudy leather sheath, and cough a warning to the two subordinates who would quicken their steps, as if to urge the prisoner forward, and as he thus stood clear behind them for a second, the sword flashed down upon his neck and he fell like a pole-axed ox. Another stroke would be given or even two, to sever the head.

The alternative was a public execution in the market before the crowd of onlookers. I have myself seen one of these, and though it was not a pleasant performance I praised the expertness with which it was carried out. On this occasion, one stroke on the down-bent neck completely severed it.

Such was the condition of Northern Nigeria as we found it after a century of misrule. Oppression, extortion and cruelty were the strings on which the Fulani played, they and their underlings, while the great mass of the peasantry suffered the burden generally in docile silence. Revolts there were from the beginning chiefly among the hardier pagans, and these continued through the century. Often they were victorious and drove the Fulani from their lands, but the Emirs, who were all united under the Sarkin Musulmi of Sokoto, would call

on the assistance of their brother chiefs, and return again and again with added force to ravage the rebellious ones. Slaves were sent in thousands to Sokoto, and through all the troubled warring years the Fulani came out victorious in the end, and then with heel set firmly on all but the topmost hills, began to lapse into luxury and ease.

Something I have told of the history of an earlier time, to show our reasons for taking up this burden of administration, and the chaos out of which we were to strive in bringing order. The heavy spade work was done, perhaps, from 1902 to 1908, and though many a year was to pass before that order began to come, though even now the work is not finished, nor will be in a hundred years, the change is marvellously noticeable in so short a time.

We had, as it were, two main things to do : first, to reorganize the Fulani States after their submission to the British Government ; and, secondly, to reduce to order and obedience the primitive hill tribes which had remained unconquered, and eventually to apply some system of administration to these also.

From the beginning we adopted the finest conception of ruling natives, that of government through the chiefs and their own recognized channels, while limiting their power to abuse their positions. We encouraged the maintenance of all native customs and institutions such as were worthy of retention, and naturally permitted the most complete freedom of religion to all. As the controlling power we imposed certain limitations, which, if unpleasant to the Emirs, were nevertheless considered by them as being such as must naturally be laid down by conquerors. These were (1) that native

rulers must not maintain armed force or indeed permit weapons to be carried by any ; (2) they must not make new laws, which were the sole right of the Government—their own code of Moslem law sufficed for nearly all their needs ; (3) they were forbidden to appropriate land, but might assign such to the natives under their rule, if in accordance with law and custom, the Government alone being authorized to appropriate land for public purposes ; (4) they must not impose taxes on the people other than those sanctioned by Government ; (5) the appointment of Emirs and minor chiefs must be made entirely by Government, although custom of inheritance or native choice was taken into consideration. In addition, institutions or customs which we considered as repugnant to humanity were abolished, and pursuit of them made punishable. Such were the act of enslaving or holding persons in pawn, or buying or selling slaves, barbarous punishments such as mutilation, cruel flogging, impalement and so on, and the methods of imprisonment such as have been described.

English law as embodied in the Nigerian Criminal Code was made applicable to the country, and Ordinances were promulgated which concerned offences not covered by the Code.

This policy of indirect rule has been ridiculed by some, and called a direct rule through channels most convenient to ourselves. It has been said that an Emir always obeys the Resident, that District Officers give orders to minor chiefs, and that in actual fact the imperative is the mood most frequently used in all relations with the chiefs. I myself, who have been through the various grades of rank, and have known and worked with twenty Emirs, have often been aware of the necessity of giving

definite orders or forbidding practices to an extent which accentuates the view that the whole position is one of command on our side and subservience on theirs. It is idle to pretend that the attitude of the Chiefs is not that of a recipient of orders, or that the mass of the people do not know it. But the matter goes much further than that, and those who trouble to think it out, in all its bearings, and such as have no axe to grind, will see that the policy must vindicate itself in time. For the passing years are showing that as little by little the native rulers understand us and our ways, begin to give opinions, exert intelligence, and get ideas, prove themselves, in fact, as men who find the old intrigues and roguery do not pay, and new methods of integrity do, so they are being given more and more scope and trust ; guidance takes the place of orders, and we who said "Do this, do that," in early days can see them now acting on their own initiative, and understanding why the act is good.

The rule is there, of course it must be, but it is the rule that educates, not tramples down or scourges the governed. It is not the older Chiefs who as a rule will help to bring our policy to success. There are among them men too old to welcome new ideas, too thoroughly inured in the practices of the old régime, to like or willingly help on the new era. They will not change, nor can one expect that they should. Some have died, inwardly stubborn to the last, some are nearing the end of their days, regretting always the times that were, and some have been deposed from their high office. But it is to the younger men we look to recognize that they may govern if they will, almost untrammelled by our supervision. The new generation in all the branches of



A GROUP OF OFFICE-HOLDERS



FULANI ON THE MARCH

administration, who only heard as children of what their fathers did in the old times, whose minds are not so warped into iniquity, these are they, and their children after them, who will inherit the going concern, and by example's force learn to govern with only a helping hand.

As the real basis of a good administration and the true recognition by the individual of his obligation to the State for his security in property and life, taxation was a necessity. For a time the old system was adopted with certain modification, experiments were tried as to the form of taxation and as to the methods of assessment, varying in different parts of the country. Collection was haphazard, unchecked and ill distributed. Half of the taxes went to Government, half to the Emir, who paid his staff of office-holders as he thought fit. We were so few in numbers in those days that little could be done to regulate the business. Enough was known, however, to make us realize how inadequate such arrangements were, and every one of us was striving to evolve a scheme more equitable than the one in use. The story is a long one, interesting only to those who did the work, and not to be recounted here.

Suffice it that after some years emerged the principle of one single tax upon the individual, a tax upon his income or property. The cultivator, by far the largest class, paid upon the potential yield of his land in a normal year, the craftsman upon the amount he made, the stock owner upon productive value of his animals. If, as sometimes was the case, the man combined in himself all three classes, all sources were assessed, and he paid upon the total income.

The general tax took the place of all the old collection

of taxes, is now paid once a year, and to this day is not as much as the Koranic tithe.

Collection assumed a regular course, a chain of reasoned value. From the farmer, who paid his village Chief, the money passed to the district Chief, and by him was brought to the Emir. The tax-gatherer was ordered to be abolished as a cog in the machine, but his eradication took years to accomplish even in a partial measure, and unofficial Jekadas still wander on their Chief's behest, till year by year they are roped in. At once it was seen that until the working members of administration were ensured a proper payment for their duties, the incentive to extort or steal some portion of the tax would be as strong as in the old days. The Emir got 50 per cent. of the tax, and had been in the habit of keeping half this for himself to pay his own expenses and his hangers-on, and share the other half among his office-holders, now called district heads, who in their turn might reward their underlings. Who could suppose, however, knowing what we did, that any but the most enlightened would share out fairly and not stick to all he could? So about 1911 the system was evolved of Native Treasuries. The 50 per cent. went into a Beit-al-Mal, there to become the revenue of the Emirate. From it were paid each month apportioned salaries, to Emir, district heads and village heads, each according to their grade, responsibility or capacity, and amounts were governed also by the size and importance of the Emirate and its revenue.

With an increasing European staff, assessments became more detailed and accurate, irregularities of payments were straightened out, and hardships of over-taxation were eased. The scope of Native Treasuries

enlarged under the organized finances, other branches sprang out and came upon the pay list. Departments of the judicial, police and prisons were formed and paid. Officials of the Treasury, public works, and a miscellaneous collection of employés, market overseers, motor drivers, carpenters, transport providers and a score of others. Forestry, veterinary, education, medical, agriculture, all began to have their staffs and activities. The Emirate revenue was augmented in many ways, the fines and fees of native courts, the market dues, the forest licences, with miscellaneous receipts of all kinds, and eventually so flourishing became the state of native finances that large reserves were formed and invested in Europe, returning annual interest to the treasuries. From the Emirate of Kano, whose treasurer handles £200,000 a year or more, down to the little State of Agaie, or the independent minute pagan community of Dass, whose annual revenue is perhaps £500, fifty treasuries or more are working on these well-conceived lines, and working well. The formerly savage and unconquered pagans are, together with their former enemies, well set on the way of progress ; and, if their intelligence in striving with the modern innovations is not so great as that of the Fulani, at least it may be said their honesty is greater.

In place of the vile torture holes which we found, new prisons were built under medical as well as administrative supervision. Well constructed of local material, they were made lofty, light and well ventilated, with ample cubic air space. The old form of shackling was abolished, and handcuffs and leg irons of European pattern substituted. Prisoners are properly rationed, and uniformly well fed, and it is a fact that they often

live healthier lives in gaol than in their own village huts. They labour at various useful works, road cleaning and repairing, prison farms, and so forth ; and to hear a working gang laughing and chattering with their warders or to see their well-fed bodies, is to know that their lives are as pleasant as they can be in incarceration. All punishments of the cruel mutilating type are abolished ; and though for the present native execution by the sword is permitted to be carried out on those condemned by native courts, with the Governor's sanction, yet they are performed both as expeditiously and humanely as is possible.

The native Courts have seen many changes for the better, just as have the other institutions. Judges and assessors are now salaried, and paid messengers assist the work. The parasites are being cleared away from the precincts of the courts as fast as their presence becomes known. They always tend to drift back and prey upon the litigants, and in the remote country courts it is by no means easy to get hold of them. The law is well administered as a whole, and the senior court in any province is one for appeal or revision of sentence or judgment.

The native police continue still, in fine old fearless fashion, to bully and grab wherever possible. They are, it may be said, the worst of all the branches of a native administration, for the African, whether under supervision of white officers or an Emir's overseer, does not make a good policeman, and never will. All that can be said is that the most flagrant extortion on the part of the *dogarai* is checked and stopped, and some of their evil activities are repressed when they come to light.

I look back on the picture of the past, seeing these

people as they were in all that quagmire of oppression, warfare and enslavement on the one side, of cruelty, extortion and rapine on the other. I turn and face the other canvas, to behold them as they are to-day, a contented congeries of races, permitted to carry on their quiet pursuits unhampered, with free right of access to fair hearing, a right which with every year they are learning more and more to use. Only those few stubborn spirits yet remain, whose bad activities are now curtailed, but who still sigh for the old days, when they rode high-handed among the cowering serfs and used them as they liked.

So much has been done in twenty years, so many spots made cleaner. Justice and peace are in the land where evil walked unchecked and unreprieved. Prosperity has followed, and each may earn and keep his earnings if he will. Good health is there, vaccination has done much to free the people from that bitter scourge of small-pox, which used to decimate the tribes and left so many weaknesses in its train. But there is so much more to do, so much already done which is imperfect. At times we pause and think we go too fast, too fast at least for Africa, whose mind and nerves are not as ours. Perhaps we are overdriving, creating half-formed notions, which have a weak foundation, and may not stand the strain of test. It may be so, and I would counsel now a halt, a quiet review, an overhauling, as it were, of what has been accomplished. So we shall see what portion of our teaching has really taken root, and what might come away at the first tug of hands which test it. What is twenty years after all, and how much of solid worth may be really done in that short time? Perhaps not such a great deal, when you are dealing with

black races, whose minds move slowly, conservative to old traditions, suspicious of all innovation, and always prone to fear what they do not understand. Rather stay awhile, consolidate, be sure of the ground, giving Nigeria time to swallow and digest, before it starts upon another course of food which is so new to it, and so give ourselves a firmer foothold for the next step forward.

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND PEACEFUL PENETRATION

FROM my tent I stepped out into the bitter dawn. Within the encampment square a blazing fire roared high, lighting up the thick thorn fence of the *zariba*, the packed-up loads and carriers sitting round them. A keen wind blowing in fitful gusts from the hills drove the red flames this way and that, and cast long flickering shadows on the ground, while at each corner of the square the shivering sentries stamped their naked feet and blew upon their fingers, staring outwards into the dark. I drank my coffee seated on an upturned box, and presently was joined by Utterson, who was in command of the company of infantry, with Austin, his British N.C.O., and we talked our plans over while our camp made ready for the march. We lay encamped at Reme at the edge of the Tangale country, upon our way to reason with the Tula tribe, which up to now had resisted every attempt of ours to get in touch with them. Truculent and insulting messages had been sent to me from time to time within the last few months, messengers and intermediaries had been killed or driven out, and though the Tulas had once before seen a former patrol in the distance no serious action had been taken against them, and for this very reason their attitude was one of a high

and mighty nature, and they were obviously spoiling for a fight. I had decided therefore that, if a last effort at conciliation on the spot should fail, a fight they must have, for it is well known that no virile pagan tribe will submit to be governed by another power without recourse to arms, and the better the fight the more amenable citizens they become thereafter, always supposing, *bien entendu*, that they are thoroughly conquered.

The Tulas numbered by report some thousands of fighting men. They were by far the most turbulent and oppressive of all the Tangale tribes, and raided and killed their neighbours unceasingly, removing such as they slew to their cooking-pots. Cannibals of a really loathsome type, they even killed and ate the old and infirm among their own tribe, and were, in fact, the terror of the countryside. Their town or collection of villages was slung upon both sides of a high towering ridge, like clusters and strings of onions on a donkey's back, and from this height they sallied out to murder or to snatch away the workers on the farms of other tribes. The ridge stood out boldly into the sky, on one side steep and difficult of approach, although a rocky winding path led upwards from the plain below. The other side fell less sharply to the upper slopes of a valley in the hills which ran back for 10 miles or so, dropping at its farther end, with another steep fall, into the surrounding plain. It was at the foot of this drop, whose only stairway was a half-dry torrent bed, that we lay encamped, and it was by this back-door entrance that I proposed to approach the unruly inhabitants of Tula and catch them unprepared, for it was my intention, if they would not listen to reason, to put an end to the reign of tyranny

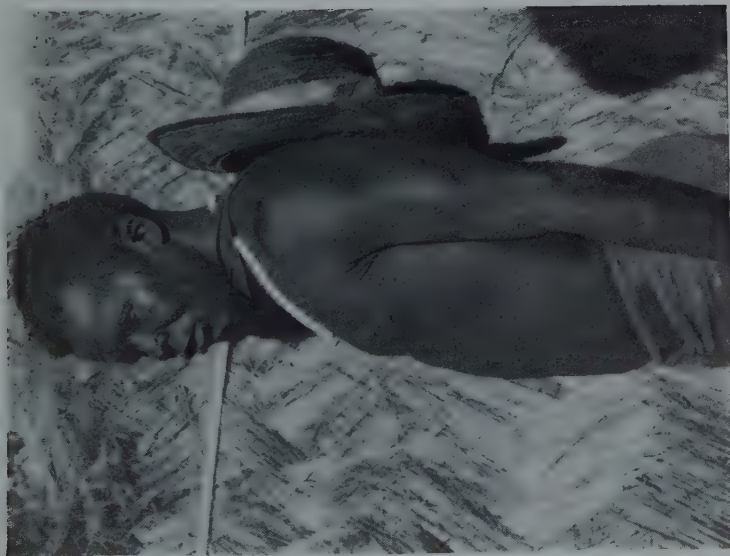
by these people; to make them recognize a power greater than their own, and to compel them to pay a nominal tax as a sign of that recognition. For this purpose I had come with a company of the Nigeria Regiment, and a maxim gun, over 100 miles from Gombe to the hill country.

Day broadened, and the growing light showed the men equipped and standing to their arms. The carriers squatted each man beside his load, all grouped about the embers of their fires. Two ponies squealed and bit each other in a corner of the square, and a couple of grooms were devouring something hurriedly out of a calabash. The word to march was given; the advance guard filed out of the *zariba* gate, the remainder following, with the carriers last under escort, and the whole cortege wound off towards the rocks and river bed. There followed a very strenuous climb up the stream path, the carriers slipping and stumbling among the rocks, wading through pools, and crashing loads and all upon the treacherous stones. Once or twice the loads and sections of the maxim gun had to be hoisted up from boulder to boulder, so steep was the ascent. After an hour or two of this, we finished with the scramble and came out upon the valley's lip, where the men were halted while they breathed themselves, adjusted loads and reformed the line, and getting on the move again we wound our way along the valley, crossing and recrossing the small river which flowed gently through the grasslands of the valley, until we sighted the dark line of ridge ahead of us, with its groups of huts upon the sky-line and compounds tumbling disordered among the rocks.

Within a couple of miles of this we halted, a level spot was chosen for our camp site, cleared of the sur-

rounding long grass, and two sections of the company set to work to cut thorns and scrub to make a fence. Sergeant Austin was left in charge of these preparations to make all ready, while I went forward with Utterson and a dozen rank and file to see if I could get in touch with some of the Tulas. We arrived about 100 yards from the ridge foot, and asking Utterson to wait there with his men to cover me, I walked on with Loba, my interpreter, to where a small dry watercourse ran parallel with the ridge. Loba was of the Ture tribe who spoke the Tula lingo, and some Hausa picked up when he was enslaved and carried off to Gombe in his early youth. He was a plucky fellow, but it was plain that he did not relish the job, no more in truth did I, for I kept my revolver ready behind my back as I went forward.

Among the rocks and undergrowth which clothed the rising ground in front of me, I could see some figures moving and slinking about, and called out to them to come and talk with me, keeping at the same time a wary eye on them, for I saw they were armed with spears and bows and were watching me intently. For some little time I called in vain, with Loba adding words of persuasion of his own, but after a while two men stepped out and down from the rocks and halted within a yard or two of where I stood. They were both of fine physique, taller and stouter than most of the Tangale tribes, but with extremely evil-looking, truculent features. They were stark naked, and armed with long spears pointed with iron and barbed-like fish-hooks, and both carried large round shields of bush cowhide. Neither of them belied the reputation of the tribe for ferocity and the cannibal tendencies of which I had heard so much.



A PAGAN CHIEF



A DANGEROUS PAIR

As I came to know them later, they ate their kind from a real pleasure in the human meat, and not, as some other Tangale tribes told me they did, because men were easier to get than game; and though I thought their custom of eating the aged of their own tribe might have something to recommend it, say in the case of a querulous grandfather or a nagging mother-in-law, who could be thus comfortably abolished, yet I felt they were the most repulsive creatures I had seen and their habits must be stopped.

Our talk did not last long. I told them I wished to see their chiefs and elders, that they should come to my camp unarmed and with safe conduct, and I would discuss sundry matters with them. I warned them against refusing to come, or coming in force, for my strength was greater than their own, and if they did so their punishment would be severe. They heard me out and, with rather suspicious haste I thought, agreed to tell the chiefs, saying, however, it was too late to come that day, but that the morrow would see them at my camp; and this arranged, I rejoined Utterson and his party and we returned to camp. Provisions were not forthcoming from the Tulas, naturally enough, since we had not come to terms, but I found some small black pagan cattle feeding in the valley, three or four of which were driven near the camp and killed, and on these the men fed heartily.

I was not a bit satisfied as to the future behaviour of the Tulas, and it seemed most unlikely that they would so tamely come in to talk things over, so I asked Utterson to double the sentries and have the company standing to arms before dawn, and also told Loba to scout outside beyond the *zariba* that night before it grew light. Soon

after dark the cooking fires died down, and scores of replete and weary forms were lying in all attitudes beneath their blankets, buried in sleep, while only the stamp of a horse or clink of a sentry's rifle broke the deep silence of the night.

I awoke to the sharp challenge of a sentry, and the rush of quick pattering feet. The false dawn was in the sky, the cold clear stars twinkling down upon the stirring camp. I heard a brief murmur of conversation, and shortly after Loba came to my tent door, to tell me that the Tulas were coming down the ridge and massing at its foot, in readiness to attack at daylight. They were moving with great silence, he said, but, lying in the thick grass, he had heard the elders talking, and saying with gibes how they would come indeed to the white man's camp and eat him up. Quickly we made our preparations. Carriers and servants were ordered to lie down behind the thorn fence for shelter, while the four sections of the company filed outside the *zariba* and lay down, each taking a side of the square, for it was uncertain whether all sides would be attacked. The horses were taken to the rear fence and securely tethered, the Maxim placed at the left front corner of the camp, with the gun section under Austin's charge; and all being ready, Utterson and I took charge of the two front sections facing the ridge.

The true dawn gleamed and spread upon the horizon behind us, and one by one, just as on a photographic plate, the rocks and trees upon the valley sides and ridge developed and sharpened before our eyes. Again the full day came and showed us the valley full of naked forms, slinking, creeping, running,

and making to approach on three sides of the square. Among them walked the chiefs, with white plumes of ox tails fastened to fantastic head-dresses, and carrying enormous shields of hide. The Tulas came on in silence to within a few hundred yards, evidently expecting an easy job, with an apparently half-empty camp to tackle. Again I walked out a few yards towards them, shouting a warning to be wise and disperse. Yells of anger, or, it may be, derision, greeted my remarks. I can well believe they contained advice to me to "cut the cackle" and get on with the work, so giving it up as a bad job I walked slowly back and signed to Utterson to carry on and let them have it.

The pagans now came on quickly; letting fly scores of poisoned arrows, and plucking at their quivers as they ran. The Maxim opened fire at this moment, but only for a dozen rounds; the belt jammed and, despite Austin's frantic efforts to clear it, refused to work again. Checked only for a moment by the noise but not the bullets, which had done no damage, the Tulas came with a rush once more, the arrows came flying into the camp, and a few throwing spears struck the ground just short of us. This time they got it hot and strong from the rifles. A white plume went down kicking and thrashing in the grass, and thirty or forty black forms lay scattered on our front. Still they came on to within 50 yards of us, but there their courage failed them, and they broke and ran for cover, and shortly after we saw the whole attack dissolving into a general retreat to the ridge. Our casualties were seven carriers and soldiers hit with arrows, but the wounds were not serious as the poison on the tips was old and dry, and none proved fatal, as

would [have] been the case had the heads been freshly dipped.

Leaving a section and native sergeant to guard the camp, we made after the retreating army, accompanied by the Maxim, which Austin with hearty British oaths had by that time got into working order again. As we reached the foot, the ridge was lined with Tulas brandishing their spears and hurling abuse at us, but this time the machine gun behaved well, and sprayed the sky-line in capital style. This proved too much for them, and when we gained the top we found the ground clear and the town deserted by all but a few old people, who appeared by no means terrified and rather apathetic. Some of these were dispatched to get hold of the chiefs and bring them in, while we breakfasted off cheese and biscuits, and inspected the town. The countless huts were built of mud and grass thatch within a few feet of each other in and out among the rocks, fifteen and twenty together all linked up by joining walls of piled up rock and stone, thus forming a fortified group of houses occupied by a family. Little mud grain bins were dotted about inside the area, and small goats and fowls wandered in and out of the huts, which had low open doorways 3 feet high. Hundreds of these hut groups were dotted about the sides of the ridge, not only on the flat spaces, but on the rocky slopes, so steep that the base of many huts stood higher than the roofs of others.

The condition inside was indescribably filthy. The huts were pitch dark and evil smelling. Upon the wall top in the larger ones numerous skulls were ranged, some stained a terra-cotta colour, others a bleaching white—the horrid relics of killings and bestial feasts. Large smoke-

blackened pots of earthenware held cold gruesome masses which we dare not investigate. The light of grass torches showed us half-gnawed human bones, flung into a corner, the flesh yet adhering to some of them, and upon the walls hung quivers of freshly-poisoned arrows with the gummy concoction of strophanthus and other horrid mixtures scarcely dry upon the barbs. Other ghastly bundles too hung there, dried human skin and finger bones, with other horrors wrapped in coarse woven cloth. A horrible stench clung to every hut, and disgusting filth lay everywhere, the odour of blood and excrement and animal matter rising from every quarter.

Revolted to our inmost being we returned after a tour of the town, to find some aged chiefs assembled for a palaver. To these I made it clear that as punishment for their attack they must collect a thousand spears and bows upon this open space to be publicly burnt, and as sign of their obedience they should pay fifty goats to feed the troops. I told them I would return to my camp in the valley, and on the following day pass up over the ridge and down the other side to my new camp half a mile below them. They heard me sullenly, but agreed to comply with the orders, and, hoping for the best, we retraced our way to the *zariba*.

The afternoon passed quietly, and no further trouble showed itself. In the evening I walked round the valley, taking some bearings with my prismatic compass and field book, and I was sitting on a rock above the valley for a while looking down upon our camp and the ground beyond, when to my amazement I saw through my glasses the ocular confirmation, if ever such were needed, of the man-eating customs of the Tulas. Two

old ladies were wandering on the battlefield, each with a basket on her head, and presently, to my horror, they set these down near to the body of a warrior who had fallen that morning, and calmly began to dismember him ! I could see their arms rising and falling as they hacked away, or tugged at a joint, and put it in the basket, and in utter disgust I made for camp, to have the old ghouls driven off.

The following morning saw the second act of the play. Arrived at the chosen spot we saw no vestige of the arms piled up, nor yet of goats, nor any sign of our Tula friends. This was pure cheek, and after a while a search among the nearest houses produced a few old gentlemen who said quite calmly that they could do nothing, the young men refused to obey them, and they advised us not to hope for anything. The young warriors heads were sore, they said, and they were not friendly towards us. This was not good enough, as I pointed out, but I said I would give them till that evening to comply with my orders, failing which I would return and make the young men's heads sorer still. Meanwhile two of them would accompany me to my new camp to await events. This they did much against their will, and all day long we waited without a sign or sight of any movement from the ridge towering above our heads. Before dawn next day Utterson and I took two sections, and softly climbed back up the steep and difficult track, and fell upon the town tooth and nail—a few who offered resistance, darting out at us from behind their walls, were killed, and one warrior who came at me with clear intent to put an end to me I shot at 3 yards' range. The heavy bullet from my service revolver passed through the centre of his heavy



PAGAN HUTS

shield and took him in the chest. The major part of them decamped once more, and as a punishment we burnt the greater part of the town, collecting all available spare weapons, and the required number of goats for food.

I then left the Tulas to rub their heads and think over the matter of coming into line, moving off to visit other places; and ten days later, encamped among another tribe, I received a deputation of the Tulas, who asked for peace, and the return of the two ancient pessimists who had travelled round with me. They now quite realized, they said, their error in not toeing the line before. They did not regret their first fight, which they considered to have been necessary, and indeed they told me that they had believed they had a soft thing on, but now they understood the position and all would be well. So, after much talk and discussion, peace was made, the old hostages rejoined their families, possibly in due time to go into the black pot of the strongest member, and quiet reigned in the countryside. Some while later I left the hills for the time, and though the Tulas when I met them again were rather troublesome, they never became truculent or put up a fight while I was in the Gombe district.

This is a brief account of war—pagan fighting—not so very murderous, nor undertaken lightly or cruelly, as some have pretended to think, but in the spirit of correction and eventual good.

But there is a sequel. I returned to Gombe district the following tour after sick leave spent in England, and there learnt to my amazement and, I will confess, my chagrin, that I had been sharply censured by the then High Commissioner, Sir Percy Girouard, for my action

in the Tula country. It was not thus, His Excellency said, that we should gain the confidence of such primitive people, etc. etc., and some other rather harsh remarks were made upon my capabilities as a political officer. Doubtless His Excellency had his point of view, and had larger issues to consider than I could know of, but I chafed under the strictures, and with a head almost as sore as those of my Tula friends I begged my Chief, Howard, to let me visit the Tangale again with a negligible escort of six men only, and try to clear myself of the implied accusation of bloodthirsty bullying which the censure had conveyed. The time seemed ripe too for another visit, for it appeared that the assistant resident who had relieved me while on leave, acting rather on the lines of peaceful penetration so evidently desired, had got into a whole heap of trouble with a small Tangale tribe, that of Awok, living on a small hill entirely by themselves, and hitherto quite calm and law abiding. A demand for a nominal tax was followed by sullen refusal, and instructions to produce their weapons for confiscation had had a similar answer. Unwilling to stir up strife, the officer had waited uselessly for two days at the foot of the hill, and eventually withdrew himself and his men, some twenty-five in number, leaving the Awok rascals crowing on their dunghill. Not for me to blame him, although I had other views about it.

For some time Howard would not consent to this rather risky proceeding, but at last, trusting, I think, in my common sense and caution, and always a believer in letting his men work out their own salvation, he allowed me to undertake the business, and I lost no time in setting out once more for the hills of Tangale and the retrieving

of my reputation of peaceful handling of the pagans. I did not anticipate much personal danger, for I relied on the previous lesson to the Tula to have a wide effect ; the only difficulty was the recovery of our prestige among the Awoks.

A bright, sharp morning found me entering the small green valley which led to the first of my objectives. Upon my left front lay the hill of Awok, on the right the hill of the Kamu tribe, while far away beyond, cupped as it were between these twin breasts, the top of the great Tangale peak soared up into the clear air. For all the luxuriant beauty to be found among the tropical rivers farther south—and beautiful they are, one must admit—there is to my mind no scenery comparable in Nigeria to the high hills and mountain ranges to be found in the Bauchi province, where one may stand sometimes and see for 90 miles around, and pick out quite easily the towns and villages in the far clear distance.

My party, all told, consisted of six native soldiers, twelve carriers, an interpreter, and five servants. We were indeed a mere mouthful even for the Awok tribe, if they were so minded to swallow us ; and though I relied upon the effect my lesson to the Tulas would have had on the surrounding tribes, yet I kept a wary eye upon events, remembering that as a horse will know when he is backed by a nervous rider, so the pagans are quick to spot a weakness in the manner of handling them, and become accordingly both cock-a-hoop and intractable. I had no easy task in front of me. The Awoks had defied instructions, they must be made to see their error of conduct, must also pay their nominal tax like their neighbours in the rest of

the Tangale, and all this I must teach them, without a show of force or recourse to fighting unless absolutely necessary. So the matter was a ticklish one—as I saw well enough—and plan how I might I did not see my way clear at all before me. Yet, as it turned out, a way was found.

Down in the valley some dark spots moved which my glasses showed me were a herd of hartebeest feeding away from me, and since food was not easily obtainable among these tribes I thought it well to shoot some meat for the carriers. As we drew near the animals, I went forward alone, and after a short stalk, wounded one and followed it up the valley for a while till a second shot brought it down finally. I was sitting comfortably upon the carcase wiping my streaming forehead when I looked up and found myself right under Awok hill, an interested mass of spectators of the tribe gazing down upon me from the rocks. A brain wave came to me in that moment. Here was a chance to obviate all formal arrival and the usual summoning of chiefs to see me! no need for the uplifted finger of admonition at a first official meeting, or the doubtful obedience of the culprits. At once I yelled and signed to the crowd that some of them should come down to share the spoil, and so indeed, responding with alacrity, they did. The common bond of hunting was set up between us, and soon I had thirty or forty of the young men round me, jabbering excitedly and pointing to the bullet holes in the defunct antelope.

My interpreter had now come up, and I forthwith explained that I would come up on to the hill and sleep in their village, and that we would share the meat. To this, after some talk, and the arrival

of one of their headmen, they agreed, and we all toiled upwards by a steep and rugged path to where the open meeting ground lay, between the groups of huts and corn bins. Here my tent was pitched, the hartebeest skinned, cut up and pleasantly divided, and in an atmosphere apparently quite friendly I settled down, in a spot where no European had ever slept before. "J'y suis, j'y reste," thought I; for although my future plans did not embrace all meat and no business, yet I felt it was a great step to have got among them so early and established first-hand relations with the tribe. Just as I expected, matters did not proceed so smoothly as they had begun, when in the evening I began to ask a few embarrassing questions about what had happened when the last officer had camped at the foot of their hill. There were some very sulky faces and evasive answers, with a general demeanour of "and that's that" about them, which did not please me a bit, and we rather seemed to have got into a "clinch," neither of us likely to break away.

Presently I asked them whether they had heard last year of anything unpleasant having happened to their neighbours of the Tula tribe, and casually mentioned that I had had some small share in it. They had, and seemed rather interested, a trifle impressed, saying naively that the Tula were very great rascals. It was then that I informed them how glad I was that they had not gone quite to the length the Tulas had, for such a small tribe as Awok (they numbered three hundred fighting men) might almost have been wiped out. Yet, I pointed out, they had certainly not behaved with courtesy on that occasion and some small corrective was needed. We would begin, I continued pleasantly,

by collecting a hundred bows or spears, to be broken up in front of my tent, in a couple of hours' time when a whistle would be blown. I would remain three or four days with them, I added, for we had many things to discuss. The audience broke up with sullen faces, the old chief of Awok saying he would see what could be done—but shaking doubtfully his grizzled head.

Looking back now, after all these years, what strikes me most is the colossal cheek of it all. Here were we some twenty-four of us, planted on the hilltop, with seven rifles among the lot. Within 20 yards of my tent were numerous groups of huts from behind any one of which a spear or arrow could come unseen. During all the conference, and the succeeding anxious interval, a number of the pagans stood watching me, some leaning on their spears, others appearing and disappearing behind the huts. My men were seated on the ground behind me, all ostentatiously pretending to clean their rifles—they told me afterwards that they had a cartridge in the breech and cut-offs open. I called for tea and drank it in the open, a book upon my knee, seeming to read, though what I read I could not tell you—keeping an eye covertly on my Awoks the whole while. Anxious for the success of this nonchalance, rather than nervous, I sat the time out; but it was rather trying, and I know a hair or two must have begun to grey during those waiting hours.

At last, with some doubt in my heart but none upon my face, I blew upon my whistle and gave them time to come along. A miracle! Forth comes my interpreter Loba, who had mingled with the elders, followed by the Awok chiefs, and some young men, bearing upon their heads some bundles, which, placed

upon the ground before me, reveal themselves as the demanded weapons. I order them to be stacked, fire brought, and at once we burn them there, while in the dusk the bonfire roars, lighting the impassive face of the ancient chief, and of the circle of his people, who, half hidden in the shadows round, stand watching that small holocaust. Perhaps the bows are warped and useless, and the spear shafts splintered or worn out. It matters not, the object lesson has been learnt, and peace so far preserved. So thankfully I sleep that night, and feel I've earned it.

Relations, thus well begun, were well maintained although we had our little difficulties. On one day we counted the huts and people of the town, with comic calculations and results. Meticulous accuracy was not the main object, and fortunately so, as in the case of Ungala, an old compound head, who evolved a total of thirty huts and nine inhabitants, or of another who had added a handful of pebbles to his count to be upon the safe side. Grass stalks, small stones in a calabash, or seeds of millet were our medium of the count, and much head shaking took place over our additions. Even the collection of a light tax was accomplished, though of course the Awoks thought it went into my pocket, for no one could imagine I should be such a fool as to collect it for some one else! Seven shillings and three pence it totalled, I think, perhaps a farthing a man, and was paid in kind, a few coarse strips of cloth, such as they crudely weave, a goat, and food for my people. Even more mystified were they when I paid them for my chickens, horses' grain, and other food, in cowries which they recognized, and indeed, had they been able to fathom it, the town was richer for my advent in the

end. And so after sundry days of profitable inquiry, I left them, wrapped no doubt in a fog of little understanding, of pleased relief that no harm had befallen them, and of wonderment at the whole affair.

Thus was the first step accomplished, while I passed on to renew acquaintance with the Tulas. Again I mounted the great ridge by the most tortuous path, kicking down a little hedge 3 inches high which had been placed across it by the chief sorcerer of the tribe, in the well-meant but futile hope that it would be powerful to stop my entry. Later allusions to this childlike form of prohibition were received by its author, the chief wizard, who was presented to me, with sulky acquiescence, and the practice was not repeated. Camped by the compound of the chief, surnamed the "Elephant," I set to work, and for ten days we wrestled with the problems of the count, the tax and their nasty habits. Of more evil dispositions than the neighbouring tribes, high-handed, sullen and intractable, it was no easy matter to keep nicely balanced the scale of punishment and reward. Punished they were with sundry beatings of the refractory, after repeated warnings, such as the rascals who would not bring their count of huts, the turbulent ones who tried to incite their fellows to ignore my efforts. Rewards, too, were given. The first town group who brought their numbers were exempt from tax. Small gifts of beads, or cloth, empty tins and bottles pleased them, and the "Elephant" was given an official gown of authority. But, with it all, it was a nerve-racking business, and I have waked at night, hearing some outburst of the drums, and wondering if the fierce outcries and yells betokened my coming extermination. Truly my revolver was never

far from my hand in those times, and daylight always brought me a relief which it is not easy to express. It was not alone my personal danger or that of my followers which worried me, but the thought of failure, of a possible disaster which would react upon the whole administrative system, and upon the man who had allowed me to come upon the adventure.

I stayed there till all useful work had been done, and as I came down once more from the great hilltop I thanked my stars that I had brought my party safely off, thinking that after all so little had lain between us and disaster. One little rush of anger into the savage animal brains, drunken with their native *ghia* (corn beer), and the fat would have been in the fire. Some years later, in another locality 200 miles away, poor Maltby, the officer of that district, suffered an unhappy end, with all his party, just from some such mad-brained attack.

It was this very kind of drunkenness which showed as a prominent feature in the third phase of my journey round these pagan tribes. After some days spent with the Ture tribe, I camped one late afternoon below the rocks of Tangalam, a tribe which had up till now displayed no signs of hostility. But on this day a great beer-drinking was going on, all the pagans were collected in one place, no notice was taken of my arrival, and no reply was given to my messenger, other than that I should depart and worry them not. That night I sat and watched them at their games and dancing in the light of great fires which were kindled at their meeting-place in the neck where two small rocky hills joined up. Again and again bands of young men would bound forward to the edge which overlooked my camp, shaking

their spears and howling threats against me if I ventured up into their midst, then dashed away to join their comrades in another dance. Up there against the background of the crimson fires, the naked forms were silhouetted in their mad contortions and drunken shouts continued late into the night, while down below my little camp lay quiet under the stars, the twinkle of my cook fire winking up at them, the men asleep around it.

The morning broke, and leaving my six men to guard the camp and carriers I clambered up with Loba to the neck above. A strange contrasting quiet lay upon the place. A spiral of smoke from one of the huts rose straight into the morning air, the fires of yesternight were dead, and a few vultures walked and hopped about the meeting ground, pecking and peering among the débris. Just as the orator in Hyde Park will mount upon his box and shout into the empty air, descanting upon the wrongs of the poor working man and blaming this Government or that, so I upon my little camp chair did raise my voice with Loba, and call upon the invisibles to hear my words. The Park lunatic gets his audience in due course, and I got mine, but in somewhat different fashion. I saw the dark figures slipping from the huts and down among the rocks, and soon I heard some arrows whistle past, and a long spear clattered on the stones before my feet. I cannot blame them when I reflect what aching heads and thirsty throats they must have had after their debauch. To be waked from heavy slumber by a strange foreign voice, to find the intrusive nuisance, as they regarded me, in their very midst, importunate and most insistent, was enough to raise the ire of the most placid, and their first idea, no doubt, was to abolish it at once, as the irate householder



PAGAN YOUTHS

hurls the boot at the love-sick cat upon the wall. However, boots are boots and spears are spears, therefore I acted quickly.

Still penetrating peacefully, I fired a shot to right and left, over their heads, and fortunately for me it was enough. Hostilities ceased, and the irritated warriors decamped, leaving me still speaking to nothingness. In due time, however, I got them in, rated them well, then laughed at them, calling them the "women of Tangalam," which nickname stuck to them for some time after.

A few weeks later my tour was finished, and I left these people for a time, returning to my station and to other work. The comments on my second report upon Tangale were complimentary, and I realized that the earlier censure, much as it had worried me, had been inspired by considerations larger than those immediately before me, and had really only conveyed a warning to be careful. Yet the whole question has its difficulties.

For here you have the factors: on the one side unbroken, lawless tribes of primitive ferocity, cannibal and animal; upon the other the administrative officer—luckless wight—who has to control them in some manner. Your missionary and your trader go among them when permitted, the one to help, the other perhaps that both may gain, and great helps to progress these agents may be if they are true men. They do not give orders nor represent the law, not theirs the thankless task of enforcing contribution to the public revenue. Certainly their business has its difficulties; it calls for courage and resource, and does much to civilize, as we may well believe. But it is the Government man, that personality

so hateful to the lawless and recalcitrant, who has the hardest row to hoe. He is up against resistance from the start. He is the man in blue who taps upon the shoulder of the felon, the dun who hangs about the debtor's gate, the general nuisance and irritating person who cries unceasingly "Do this, do that," till all the world of paganism calls upon its gods, whichever they may be, to rid them of his intolerable presence.

No wonder that he cannot accomplish all he must by honeyed words and gentle handling. When as tax-collector you for the first time touch the pocket of primitive man, and as policeman the unfettered liberty of the wrongdoer, when even as administrator you come among them to instil most new, unheard-of schemes into their social life, you rouse, quite naturally, an instinct of resistance; and if the material on which you work is of such nature as will say at once, "Here is meat, let us kill and eat it," only a fool is he who will venture to this work with unarmed hands. Had I reversed the order of my going, and entered the Tula town with my six men in the beginning, exhorting them to behave and do my bidding, there would have been no second chance. There is a time for gentle handling and a time for force, and who should know it better than the man who does the job?

There are those in England who descant, unknowing the true facts, upon the high-handed methods of pioneers making a new country. Questions are asked in Parliament, and at times much heated argument arises, the outcome of that very ignorance; but the man upon the spot who knows the difficulties, and is after all no ogre of brutality, cares little for their windy words, believing, if some few grains of philosophy lie within his

nature, that each man has his job to do, some to create and some to criticize, and so goes on, unhampered by the gassy froth, and thanking his God that he is one of those who try to construct, not struggle to destroy the value of such building.

CHAPTER V

THE DAY'S WORK

BY those who have nothing more than a transient interest in the country I have been asked what exactly was my work and what I did each day. In these easier times of larger staff and more departments, the political officer is able to devote himself much more to the administrative side, but in the early years he turned his hand to everything. You see him as the prosecuting counsel and defender, as well as judge in the Provincial Court, sometimes the hangman too—Coroner and deputy sheriff and keeper of the gaol. Also he is policeman, postmaster and supplier of transport, sub-treasurer and keeper of that remarkable invention, the revenue suspense account, wherein recorded on fair paper are the details of a quaint collection of rubbish, called tax in kind, which lies in the mud-built store ; such things as bags of cowries, ivory and iron, strips of cloth, or bundles of guinea corn. How we have wrestled with it, that suspense account, till with reeling brain we have been driven to multiply the corn by cowries or deduct the cloth from gutta-percha, to find out why there is a loss on realization to cash.

The list of duties is not ended, for the political man is the doctor of himself and others, sanitary officer and town planner. He collects tsetse flies, and samples of

native products such as fibre, silk and seed, reports on cattle, cotton, or shea butter, answers questions which are legion : on how best to segregate lunatics and lepers ; the reason why the children do not care for European education ; if the people are willing to be vaccinated ; why the taxes are in arrear ; when he will get them in—almost in fact “ Where do flies go in summer time ? ” He assesses and collects the taxes on land and cattle ; he counts the cash, divides it with the Chief ; he ropes in slave dealers, stamps out wizardry and *bori* dancing. Further, he makes roads and bridges of a sort, drains marshes and trains bullocks to draw carts, builds houses, fixes boundaries both of districts and of provinces, makes maps, lays out markets, supervises the working of the native administration in all its branches. Experiments with this and that, fails and succeeds, paves the way in fact for all the experts who shall come in later years to damn his work or alter it. A Jack of all trades, there to be shot at, blamed when things go wrong, but, if such be unction to his soul, alluded to at far off public dinners as a nameless one of the gallant band who fly the flag at Empire's farthest outposts. This is his work and this the meed of praise bestowed on him.

I am just back from touring, and my office hours officially, which means nothing, begin at 7 a.m. and last till 2 p.m., with an interval for breakfast. I see the crowd which waits about the office door, and I know the sun will be going down to-day before I shall have finished with them. I enter the bare mud room which is my office and court-house in one. Upon the red brown walls are hung a map or two, some files of papers in iron clips, and a board of notices. Some wooden shelves, made of old provision boxes, hold the record books and

“archives,” while sunk deep into the hard beaten floor of earth lies a cash tank of galvanized iron with ponderous padlocks of the same, holding the local treasury. In one corner stands my table covered with an old blanket, ink-spotted, and stained with muddy drippings from the old and leaky roof above my head ; in another lies a pile of lumber, staves of office, confiscated spears or bows, some empty ammunition boxes, and a drum of tar. My native clerk, a gentleman from the Gold Coast, welcomes me by gravely bowing from his seat, and then resumes his task of making quite incorrect entries from the cash book on a payment voucher. He will express, I know, unfeigned astonishment when later I shall check them, pointing out mistakes, and smiling ruefully will scratch his fuzzy head and return to his table to make others of the same kind. At present he hinders more than helps me, but I have some hopes of him, for at least he is a willing youth, and anxious to improve.

The mail is in, I see, and the sealed bag opened, pours a dozen envelopes on my table—all official. I pick one up and read, “An overpayment of £1, 3s. 6d. was made to eighteen carriers in July accounts. Please recover or explain.” This is not my palaver, but my predecessor’s, so I mark it, “Officer concerned on leave, refer to him.” The Treasury query, that pestilent reminder that accuracy in cash accounts is of the first importance, was in the beginning a rare bird, for accounts were simple, and, with mails so few and far between, the question would refer to a transaction which had happened ages ago and not in the knowledge of a recipient. Often I suspect it would be pushed into the rubbish box, in the sure and certain hope that it would be other ages before a more insistent demand would come, and meanwhile there was

more important work to do. The Resident in another paper calls for a statement of the amount of grain harvested from a measured acre, the number of bundles and their weight. In yet another he comments thus : " Your para. 9. This man should have been tried under section 290, not 210, of the Criminal Code. Your paras. 25 to 30. A meagre report on an interesting subject, please amplify," and so on for a dozen lines, bestowing praise or blame. I finish with the rest, mostly minor subjects of little interest, and summon my head messenger, or political agent, to learn who waits outside for justice or redress, or comes to pay his taxes, or, more likely still, who will attempt some explanation of his failure to produce them. Glibly Umaru reels off a list from memory, and would enlarge upon the merits of a cause or two, but that I stop him, knowing well that he has not been idle since the dawn, and that sundry small gifts have been demanded or else pressed upon him by the complainants to gain for their suit the judge's ear. For Umaru is the introducer, the adviser as he will tell them, and must be placated, or so they think, imagining the white man to be like the black.

I learn that the Mijindadi has arrived ; he is the Emir's representative who comes daily to report and take instructions, bringing the news or hiding it as it suits the Emir best. He takes precedence, so enters with much dignity, and sinking to his knees, as is their custom, bends his forehead to the floor in salutation. I am becoming proficient in the Hausa tongue, so we converse pleasantly together thus :

" Greeting to you, Mijindadi, you are well ? "

" Lion, I am well, may God prolong your life."

Lion (*zaki*) is the mode of address used to all in

authority whether white or black, as is the genuflection and obeisance.

“ And is the Emir well ? Salute him from me.”

“ The Emir is well, lion, and rejoices greatly at your return.”

This, of course, is a *façon de parler*, for the Emir much prefers me absent, and not too near at hand to watch his actions. Alongside him, I ask too many troublesome questions which he finds hard to answer. However, we proceed with these honeyed phrases for a little while, as etiquette demands, and then proceed to discuss the business of the day. I ask the news. Everything is well ; extraordinarily so, it seems. This again is but a form of speech, meaning nothing, for we are both aware that it will not cover all the facts, as we shall find them disclosed a little later.

“ And after that, what has happened in my absence ? ”

“ Nothing, lion.”

It is very hard to get these people to make statements on their own initiative, to come to the point. The Mijindadi, loyal to his chief, is not going to give him away by any rash remarks, and everything must be dragged out by direct question.

“ Strange,” I remark, “ there was much work to be done when I went away, for which we made arrangements, did we not ? Has the town paid up the remainder of its tax, now long overdue ? ”

“ Not quite all, lion,” ingenuously.

“ How much then remains ? ”

“ Just over £30, lion.”

In other words, probably £39, 19s. 11d. ! In fact, it turns out to be much as I had thought, since we subsequently find, after consultation with the Emir's scribe,

that the sum still outstanding is a few pence short of £40. The Mijindadi is an artist in his profession. Not at all a bad fellow or too much of a passive resister, he has plenty of intelligence, but he cannot yet understand the value of being honest and straightforward in all things. His is the tortuous, the native way. He has a delicate job to do each morning that he comes. He is a constant smoother away of difficulties. He must hear reprimands or unpleasant instructions, and convey them to the Emir, who may rate him soundly for having been so clumsy as to cause them to be sent. He has to bring excuses or report failures, and weather the storm of annoyance at their receipt. True, he does not tell the unpleasant truth more often than he must, nor tell it fully when he has to, and he watches carefully how the cat jumps before he makes his statements, his motto always being "Anything for a quiet life." So I cannot blame him altogether, for I see his difficulties and am patient with him, so that now and then we do arrive at a point where he sees that straightness is the better course. We proceed.

"I hear a prisoner, that dangerous highway robber, has escaped from the native gaol."

"Yes, lion, and the Emir wishes to punish the warder by giving him the same imprisonment as of him who got away."

This was five years, by the way. The Mijindadi is quite pleased at the suggestion, hoping that I shall be equally so, but we decide that this severity will not fit the case, and a much lighter punishment is arranged. I go on :

"Tell the Emir that the Galadima has been taking illegal *zakka* (tithe) of grain from the people of his

district, in addition to their tax; I have had many complaints about it, and there is plenty of proof. I am very angry about this, for the Galadima has been warned frequently to stop this practice. I will see the Emir to-morrow, and he will advise me what shall be done."

The Mijindadi is certainly nonplussed, and his face shows it. How in the world did I get hold of this? Everybody knew about it, of course, every one, that is, but me. Who would have imagined I should hear of its recurrence so soon? The fat is in the fire—the Emir will be drawn into it, and there will be hell all round! Native like, he gives me time to simmer down, to lose the first sharp edge of my annoyance, agreeing that such conduct is disgraceful, deserving of much punishment, then in a disarming voice he mentions that the Emir has sent for my acceptance a sheep, five chickens and some guinea-corn, to welcome my happy return.

"Thank the Emir," I reply. "I do not accept large presents, as he knows. I will take two chickens, to mark appreciation of the gift, and request him to take back the rest."

The Mijindadi regrets my refusal, fears the Emir will take it as a mark of my displeasure, begs me to take the lot; but I am firm, and tell him that refusal or acceptance has nothing to do with official matters.

Once more we go on, discussing, inquiring, or instructing in a dozen other subjects: a small-pox outbreak and means to isolation; new rules suggested to protect the valuable forest trees from destruction; the arrest of sundry persons who are evading payment of



THE MIJINDADI

their tax. I suggest for the Emir's views some new grouping of villages, and alteration of districts. The Mijindadi gives me, after patient handling, some news of robberies, other taxes paid, the death of a village head, a town destroyed by fire. Then, after an hour's talk, we finish for the day, he with relief, I do not doubt, and I to turn to other matters ; and so after dismissal I see him go, a tall and slender figure with grace in every line of him, clad in the long flowing Hausa gown, which swings to every movement as he walks out with the slow dignity of his position as Emir's confidant and member of the reigning house. He is three-quarters Fulani, a younger brother of the Emir, and shows in slender hands and feet, thin features, and light brown colour, all the characteristics of the northern race. Perhaps one day he may rule the Emirate himself, and in his intriguing brain there may be stirring even now ideas and hopes and resolutions for that happy day. He mounts his horse and, robe aflutter in the breeze, rides away townwards, attendants running at his side, to give the news of his long interview with me to him who waits at the palace.

Umaru enters at my call, and brings the first of the petty complainants, who have been waiting stolidly outside under the big trees which shade the compound. The patience of these people is inexhaustible, especially in litigation. They will wait all day in my compound, or the native court, without a murmur at the delay, and if their case cannot be heard will go away quite cheerfully, to return upon the morrow. Time is no object to them, and always there is to-morrow and to-morrow. Fatuma is the first, the young and pretty wife of a policeman of my detachment. Sinking to her

knees in demure and pretended awe, she remarks, "Lion," in salutation.

"What is it, Fatuma ?"

"I bring complaint."

"Against whom ?" These people never state their case right away, giving names and dates and stating facts. Such would be against the code.

"Against my husband."

"Who is he ?"

"Adamu Kano."

"What is your complaint ?"

"Last night he beat me."

"For what reason ?"

"For no reason."

Now we are getting nicely down to the matter, and already the complainant is trying to spoil her case by concealing facts.

"Call Constable Adamu Kano."

He enters, smartly makes a right turn and stamps resoundingly upon the floor as he salutes. I repeat the matter of complaint. Adamu, with the immovable face of parade, explains the position. Fatuma, it seems, was gadding about in the market when she should have been getting his evening meal. Returning late she got what apparently she richly deserved, a slap on the face. They are a happy married pair in the ordinary way, and Adamu can evidently deal with his household without assistance.

"Fatuma," I say, "is this true ?"

"Yes, but I had hit my foot on a stone and took long to come from town." Foot inspected, with no sign of a bruise.

"Fatuma, you will return with your husband, and

behave properly in future. Further, tell no lies in court."

They go out together, quite friendly, though I suspect she gets another slap later on for causing trouble.

The next case is that of Hassan and his brother Bello of the village of Durum, who have been made to pay more than their share of land tax by the village headman. At great length they describe how they paid so much in grain as their proportion, how this grain with much other was eaten by the headman, who then came down upon them for further contribution and took their one and only sheep. All these statements may or may not be strictly in accordance with the facts, but these honest farmers seem to have a case, and so they go with a letter to the Emir, to have the complaint investigated, and a report made to me.

A woebegone individual is next ushered in, holding in one hand the other forearm in which appears an unpleasant gash. He allows the blood by a bit of squeezing to drip upon my floor, this action, coupled with a face screwed up to denote excruciating pain, being quite the correct one, as showing the seriousness of the matter. I tell him to remove this expression from his countenance as quickly as possible, and, calling for some water and permanganate, I wash the wound and give him a cloth rag to bind it up. This is a fight, and his late antagonist is now hustled in, to stand by his side with a look of injured innocence. The knife which did the deed, a dirty-looking instrument, is placed upon my table as triumphant evidence—not that it is required, for the accused, a cheerful-looking youth, admits the truth at once. I elicit the facts. Neither, of course, began the altercation which led to the struggle. It was

a market quarrel, and I send them to the Alkali, the native judge, who will, when the wound is healed, award compensation for it to the injured if it can be got. No doubt the cheerful youth will borrow it from somewhere. The combatants depart, no rancour left, the wounded man no longer carrying his injured member in his hand, or agony on his features.

Once more the room is filled with a plaintive crowd, this time two women of the bush Fulani type, with each a baby on her back strapped tightly there by a blue cloth, which binds them both together. To me the constriction seems unbearable, but the mites seem comfortable enough, and regard me gravely with the speculative stare of childhood from behind the mother's shoulder. Accompanying these is a slim Fulani boy with a sister of about fifteen, and lastly shuffles in a crafty-looking older man in gown and turban none too clean. This is a case which has been brought to me before. The women and children are relatives of a Hardo-Fulani cattle-owner—lately dead, and they had claimed their share of his estate by Moslem law. The foxy gentleman in the grimy gown had seized his brother's cattle, and attempted to settle the matter out of court by giving them a cow or two. His efforts frustrated, he had come unwillingly to the native court, and after much wriggling produced the total of the property in goods and stock, which had been legally divided by the judge. I hear the details, and am satisfied, whereon I give the crafty one a warning not to let me have complaints again of his behaviour. Squirming he goes, the others filing after him, profuse in their gratitude for my intervention, and calling down blessings on my head.



P.C. ADAMU KANO

A few other small affairs are investigated, and then I take a breather and my breakfast. Even at this I am not left undisturbed, for the *maigardi*, snake-catcher, has arrived to search my house and compound. I have been much troubled lately by the reptiles, and think it time to clear them out. Presently I walk around and watch him at his work as he noses here and there, sometimes making a low whistling noise between his teeth. I see him stoop down to the gnarled roots of an old tree, his hand goes into a hole and forth he draws a wriggling horror, and unconcernedly pops it in his bag. His steps now lead him to my servants' quarters. He peers into first one and then another, shaking his head to show that none are hiding there, then at the door of my head groom's house he pauses and looks closely at the ground. He enters, and I hear him groping about inside. He calls to me to stand clear while he throws out into the open a big puff adder, which curls itself up in the dust and raises a wicked head to "huff, huff" at me as I approach him. In a moment another, the female, as he tells me, comes flying out, and the *maigardi* follows, spits upon the snakes, first one and then the other, then calmly picks them up and adds them to his collection. He is safeguarded from their poisonous bite, he explains, by drinking a concoction made of certain herbs or leaves only to be found in rare places in the bush, and he is undoubtedly an expert in his manner of handling them. Soon I leave him to his work and return to my own, and further struggles with the native mind.

Comes now a District Headman with, as I hope, the balance of outstanding tax from dilatory villages. We greet each other pleasantly as usual, as though he never had to confess to lack of efficiency, or I to complain of it.

He is a lazy old fellow this, one of the old régime, a non-progressive, passively resisting, extortionate old backslider, and he knows I know it. However, we smile agreeably at each other, putting off until the latest possible the moment when hard things may have to be said or taken. His *maallam*, or scribe, sits just behind him, reading out the list of tax collected, the village heads concerned grouped on one side. This time, it appears, the tally is complete, so many bundles of guinea corn, valued at so much, some cash, five cows and three mares, with sundry bags of cowries, that currency of Nigeria which is beginning to disappear, replaced by English imported silver. The total value seems correct, and we are all full of self-congratulation. Dark faces relax their anxious tension, while the old District Head, who has been threatened with deposition from his office should he fail after much warning to get his tax in, feels himself safe for another year.

Perhaps those faces fall again a little when I inform them that I am not clear why a mare is paid as the tax of many individuals, when it surely must have been taken from some single payer. Volubly they explain that the late owner will be reimbursed in due time by those for whom he thus has produced the tax, and, it being inexpedient to press the matter too closely, I accept their statement feeling fairly sure, under their village system, that if A. has contributed the mare he will recoup himself in time—from all the rest of the alphabet if necessary—for, as I have said, time is no object to these people, and they have their methods of arrangement, which are not ours.

So receipts are given to the village heads, and to him who is their district chief, Mr. Johnson once again

displays his erratic tendencies in filling up the forms, and all at last depart with faces of relief, for is there not a full year to pass before the next tax season ? a year in which Allah the all-powerful, who alone directs the course of human affairs, may see fit to increase their prosperity, or remove me from the chair of office, or, in fact, do one or other of his inscrutable acts which the future only can disclose, but which may militate in their favour.

We turn next to the question of a sale by auction of all the tax in kind which has been brought out of the storehouse, together with such live stock as has been guarded at pasture on the river flats. My chair is taken out under the shade of a large tree in the compound, where I sit as auctioneer to wield the hammer. Before me are ranged the bags of cowries, bundles of grain, four or five tusks of ivory, bundles of *fari*, the white strips of coarse cloth the pagans make, and some baskets of red *gamji*, gutta-percha. There is a little rough iron, worked locally, some acacia gum and other odds and ends, while at one side are collected the live stock : sheep and goats, a dozen cows, and as many ponies and mares. This is also stock-taking day, and with the suspense account I check amounts and numbers with Mr. Johnson, who is in his element and will shortly be a buyer at the auction, doubtless borrowing the necessary money from me till next pay day.

Naturally we find some shortages, a bag of cowries and some guinea corn. The messengers, like an opening chorus in musical comedy, explain how the white ants have done the damage, producing two torn and remnant bags to prove their words, the senior adding that they made up one new bag from the scattered contents of

the old. Although I know that white ants do not care for cowrie shells and Government messengers do, I do not prolong the argument, but write off the loss, hoping that the Treasurer in far headquarters will see eye to eye with me when he gets the statement.

The native town is large, and so we have plenty of buyers, police and traders by profession, as well as all the other members of the audience, for all are traders by nature and never lose a chance of a good bargain. Government auctions such as these are godsend to the townspeople, for things go cheap, and not much time is wasted by the harassed auctioneer. The grain goes mostly to the Emir, by proxy, to feed his prisoners in the gaol, and the cowries at fixed rate of exchange are taken by the bigger men. Audu Maikarfi, the wealthiest trader in the town, gives me 4s. 6d. a pound for the ivory, and after this the bidding is quite brisk, until the last sheep and strip of cloth is sold, and every one is happy, they with their bargains, and I to have my storehouse cleared.

The sun is long past noon, but much is yet to do, and, somewhat fagged, I call for tea and biscuits, which I consume the while I draft some letters and check the entries in my cash book, pay off some carriers, or others who demand their due. There still remain two cases to be tried, all that I can manage to-day, and already the court scribe is preparing to swear in the Moslem witnesses. The first cause is a murder charge, mostly heard, and remanded for further evidence, which is now forthcoming, and I propose to finish it to-day.

There has been no great difficulty in the proceedings up to date, for the murderer confessed the crime from the beginning, although by order of the Court he was

made to plead not guilty. I had been trying to prove the extenuation of insanity, and had searched for witnesses who could give some information on the point. The court is opened, and the accused, between two constables, stands before me, a man of middle age, clad in a ragged gown, dirty and unkempt. He is a pagan, one of a tribe who are bordering on civilization, that is to say, who wear clothes of sorts, and speak the Hausa tongue fairly well. The facts, as are recorded in the minutes of the trial, are briefly these. Accused had married a young wife, who at a given time took up her abode with her two aunts, under whose care she would remain during the troubles of childbirth. When all was safely over, and she was due to return to her husband, the two dames persuaded her to stay with them for a while longer. Accused made several attempts to induce her to come back, which it seemed she was prepared to do, but the aunts, who were real viragoes, urged her to remain, saying the husband was an irresponsible creature with no real means of livelihood, and her life with him would be a hard one. Annoyed, the husband left her for a time and wandered about the country, then returned, and sought the compound in the village where his wife was staying. He told her to pack up her odds and ends and come back with him, whereupon the two old women flew at him with bitter words and curses, pushed him from the door, and swore she should not go with him. That evening he returned and with an axe he slew the pair after another altercation, not savagely, but with a stroke apiece upon the head, and then sat calmly down to await the return of his wife and other members of the house who were at market.

The trial proceeds, and I examine three witnesses—

Mohammedans—one a fellow villager who knows accused, and the others who are acquainted with him in the village where the deed was done. All three reply straightforwardly enough. They have known the accused, and indeed they sympathized with him in his trouble, but they cannot say that he is mad or even silly. He is a farmer, and a quiet man enough, nor have they ever heard of any occasion when he behaved wildly or outrageously, although one of them states that he has heard accused groaning heavily in the night.

Thus one by one they are sworn and give their evidence, after which the accused is heard in his defence. Quite simply he speaks, and says the woman was his wife who was ready to come back to him; the two old women came between them, and in righteous anger he smote and killed them. He has nothing more to say, so in due course I sum up, finding the accused guilty of murder, and sentence him to death. Thus I inform him, but add that the matter is to be referred to the Governor for confirmation. He takes the sentence with amazing calm, as all natives do, and not a muscle of his face moves, though his eyes show that he understands. Perhaps life and death are held more lightly by these children of the sun than by us of the so-called world of civilization, or it may be, as they say and feel, "the fate of each man is bound about his neck." He answers, "Be it so," and at my nod is turned about by the impassive police, and goes out into the sunshine which he will not see much longer.

Once more the court is filled, this time to overflowing, for enslaving is the charge brought against three Hausas, who have come from Yola, many days' journey, with four small pagan children sold into

bondage, or stolen from their people. I have had agents out to watch the passers on a road which leads to Gwaram, one of the great markets of the slave trade, and after some weeks a suspicious gang have been arrested, and brought to answer for their presence in the district. There are witnesses innumerable, and the case promises to be a long one, and so I open the proceedings, prefer the charge, to which the rascals plead not guilty, and remand the case until the following day. Thereafter the office staff is dismissed, while Mr. Johnson and I confer upon some last matters of routine, and check some figures which, to my surprise, he has completed with some approach to accuracy; then he too covers up his disordered table and departs to doff the garb of collared civilization and take his ease in some gaudy cloth and native shoes in the bosom of his family. For an hour yet I sit alone and write my office diary, the perspiration dripping from my forehead in that oven, till I too have had enough and leave my papers for another day.

The evening is at hand, the red rays of the dying sun are cast across the world, barring the ground with fast lengthening shadows, as I set out with gun on shoulder to try for sand-grouse in the river bed.

My head is aching from the long hot hours, the stuffy atmosphere within the sun-baked walls, the interminable contact with the native mind. But the evening breeze is blowing down the river. It ripples the scanty pools in the river sand, and stirs the tall grasses on the bank, while for an hour I wander here and there, refreshed and strengthened by its touch. The *Kurchia*, ever-cooing dove, sends out its gurgling call from every tree, the guinea-fowl are calling away

there beyond the river, and from the distance there comes the faint beating of drums within the town. The sun has gone and dusk comes shadowing down as I turn homewards ; smoke rises from the cooking fires in the barracks ; they call and chatter to each other there, and I go solitary to my mud-house and my evening meal.

CHAPTER VI

THE SIXTH TOUR

I WENT to Kano in July of 1914. I had first seen it in 1909, and the passing years had brought some changes. Then I had ridden in after seventeen days of a wet journey from Zungeru, and passing through the great mud city reached the three bungalows and scattered huts of the station which lay 4 miles beyond it. This time I jolted in on the last stage of the now completed railway from Lagos, 700 miles away, rumbling in to the great tin terminus of the line. Civilization was here at last, dragging itself across the plain between the city and the Government quarters in the form of a laid-out township with brick and stone-built houses of the European trading quarters, stores, canteens and workshops, while broad, straight roads cut through it everywhere.

A township market, acres in extent, seethed with a mass of hagglers and trading folk of every race, for Kano had become the hub of northern trade. One saw in an hour's walk there Arabs from Tripoli and Tunis; Syrians from the Levant and even Turks; Yorubas, Lagosians and people of south country tribes; Hausa, Kanuri from Bornu, the people of Wadai and Air in the French Sudan, Asbenawa and Tubu, Fulani, pagans from the far hill country of Bauchi. The traders from

Europe were there in scores, British, French, Italian, German, with Swiss and Greeks and at least one Russian, all frantically intent on buying products.

The Government station had increased in size. A big stone Residency stood lonely to the south, most unattractive in appearance, though cool enough inside with double-storey and thick outer walls, while other rather tin-pot bungalows had sprung up mushroomlike in cheerful disregard of their allotted sites upon the station plan.

The administrative service had just at this time been reorganized and regraded. Sir Frederick Lugard, after a long absence in Hong-Kong, had returned to us as the Governor-General of an amalgamated Nigeria, which comprised his former ewe lamb, Northern Nigeria; Southern Nigeria; Egbaland and Lagos. I had received my second promotion, and was graded as a senior District Officer appointed to take charge of the Kano Emirate Division.

In the absence of Mr. Gowers, the Resident, who had just gone on leave, and owing to the sudden transfer of another District Officer who was senior to me, I had the luck to be appointed Acting Resident of the Kano Province some ten days after my arrival. I was fortunate, for the post was an important one, and the responsibilities by no means light. Even in normal times the direction of affairs in such a province would have been difficult enough for one who had till then done only district officers' junior work, with limited responsibility and powers.

Kano, in area, is as large as Belgium, comprises nine separate Emirates, with a total native population of over two million, and was filling rapidly with Europeans, both



THE CITY GATE

Government and non-official. Such normal times were not to be, however, and I had installed myself but a few days in the Residency office when I realized that many heavy hours of work lay before me in every twenty-four.

The previous year had been disastrous to the farmers in the northern provinces. A serious drought had ruined the crops of guinea-corn and millet, and from every province had come the same report, almost complete failure.

This year the effect of shortage showed itself in all its ghastliness. The gaunt ghost of famine stalked abroad through Kano and every other part. The stricken people tore down the ant-hills in the bush to get at the small grains and chaff within these storerooms. They wandered everywhere collecting the grass burrs of the *kerangia* to split the centre pod and get the tiny seed. They made use of every poor resource their ingenuity could think of, and, ravenous in their hunger, seized on anything they could steal or plunder. Mothers could not feed their babies at the breast, and cows' milk lacked, for pasture had dried up and the cattle were just skin and bone. The great city of Kano drew the starving thousands from the country in the faint hope of scouring in the streets and markets to pick up what they might, or beg the charity of the townsfolk. Not only Nigerians but thousands from French country drifted down across our borders, passing through villages *en route* all bare of food to offer them. They died like flies on every road. One came across them in the town markets, emaciated to skeletons, begging feebly for sustenance, or collapsed into unconsciousness where they sat, and one poor wretch died in the Residency garden where he had crept at night with his last strength.

All the while the new grain was growing on every farm, to be harvested in a few weeks more, and their eyes were turned hopelessly on the abundance which would come too late to save them. Their misery was a pitiful sight, and we set to work to alleviate the suffering as quickly as we could. All available grain was hurried up from the Southern districts unaffected by the drought, though supplies from there were inadequate enough. Twelve hundred tons of rice had been ordered from England by Mr. Gowers, but it was much delayed, and the arrival of each dilatory cargo boat was eagerly watched. The town wards all had a number of the starving billeted upon them, although the householders were short of foodstuffs as it was. Each was given a requisition paper to draw a quantity of grain from a central store to feed his protégés. Other centres were formed for distribution of the rice as it rolled in, and the daily issues were the scenes of wildest clamour and struggle, as the poor strangers snatched like animals at their ration. A crèche for small babies was started by the wife of the Director of Education, where tinned milk and other necessities were provided. Every one worked hard at this famine relief work in the midst of other duties, and we saved many lives, though thousands died; and when the crisis passed, as it did with the reaping of the new crop of millet, we had time to draw a little breath, and count the cost. One realized at such a time how utterly these people were dependent on good rains to avoid starvation; let those rains fail, and they were in a sorry state.

Nigerian farmers are not provident, they never take thought about the morrow, or keep a reserve in hand for times of scarcity. The average man just

sows and reaps for present needs. He has to feed himself and wife and children for a year and keep enough grain for next year's seed, for paying his tax and a bit for charity and hospitality. That is all the great majority bother about. In an abundant year they will have an extra surplus, but it is by God's will, not their own effort, that they gain it. At first sight it is difficult to understand why they do not guard against the rainy, or in Nigeria the non-rainy day, but they have their reasons, and one can suppose they know best what suits them. Constitutionally they are lazy, and will not work more than they need, though while they are at it they work hard. Another thing they know is that rain shortage is rare on the whole, and they trust to luck and Allah. Probably, too, they did not think it politic in the old days of extortion to be possessed of more than they required, for that meant working for a surplus which would soon be taken from them; and to be known as a wealthy farmer, without the power of self-protection, was not at all a desirable thing. Also they are fatalist. What will be will be, and therefore not for them to worry over.

What with famine relief in and round the city, and the usual administrative work going on the while, my time was fairly occupied, and I was just getting settled down to things, when war broke out and piled up further complications. Reuter's telegrams had been lacking for a few days, and though uncertainty was in the air, we in Kano did not know how near the cloud-burst really was. My first hint of what was happening came from the soldiers. I was at my office table, rather ruefully looking at the pile of minute papers stacked there which I knew would keep me busy for some time,

when an officer of the Mounted Infantry came in and, with the "hush but hark" air of a stage conspirator, glanced round as though for possible listeners, and satisfying himself that we were alone muttered :

"Can you provide five hundred carriers at twelve hours' notice ? "

I said I could, and asked him why. This, however, he would not disclose, though he was most obviously full of suppressed excitement ; and once more getting my assurance that the men would be collected if required, he removed himself as secretively as he came. Almost I could see a warning finger on his lip, the flap of a dark cloak about his face, like the second robber in the play. Next morning Lord Henry Seymour, who commanded the M.I., came in from Katsina, where he had gone to buy remounts for the battalion. He came over to see me at once and told me war was imminent, perhaps a matter of a few hours, and that he had orders to be prepared to move at twelve hours' notice to the boundary of the Cameroons. He was much amused at his junior officers' effort to keep things dark from one who, as the senior officer of the province, had the organizing and arranging of all things at Kano in the event of war. Together we worked out the programme for the furnishing of transport, supplies and guides, if the troops should be required to move, and marked out the route to be followed to the border.

The next evening we got the news, I from the Lt.-Governor, he from the Commandant of the forces at Zungeru. I shall not easily forget that evening as I sat in Seymour's compound with a group of officers over the evening drink after polo ; the arrival of the wires in code ; the adjutant deciphering his, and coming

down the bungalow steps waving the message in the air. War, bloody war! the toast was drunk in great excitement, and keen delight shone on all the soldiers' faces. Poor chaps! for some of them the future which they discussed so eagerly was to be short enough. Within a very few weeks the M.I. got into trouble at Tepe just across the border. The fellows who had been, as soldiers always are, the life and soul of the station, leaders in all the sports and fun, rode all too soon into ambush or surprise. Wickham was shot dead on his horse, Seymour hit in the neck, MacDonnell in the ankle, and a little later, when the rest got going and cleared the place, Sherlock, while receiving the surrender of a German officer, was killed at point-blank range by the German's orderly, who fired at him without warning.

The M.I. left Kano at once, followed very shortly by the infantry by train for the south to join the general concentration of the forces. Our next few weeks were full ones. My junior staff, already inadequate in numbers for the work, was further depleted. Uniacke, who had joined the political a year or two before, and Chaytor were seconded for intelligence and transport work with the M.I. The former, a born soldier and leader, very shortly reverted to military service, and eventually, after the Cameroons were occupied, took his men to East Africa, where he served with the greatest distinction. Soon after Gepp from Katsina and Stuart Taylor joined up on leave. Both of these good fellows lost their lives, Gepp in Gallipoli, Taylor from wounds received in France. With this shortened staff I was hard put to it to keep things going. Vischer, the Director of Education, himself a former political officer, helped me in judicial work, and I detained in Kano

certain luckless fellows who were passing through on their way on leave.

All civilians, both official and commercial, were enrolled in what was called the Land contingent, and one long morning was employed in swearing in the members of this force. Enrolment seemed a thirsty business, and the Residency beer-cellar was emptied by the time we finished. In the event we warriors were never called on to defend the station, and as time went on many good men drifted away to become real soldiers elsewhere in Africa and Europe, while the relics of the band went on quietly doing their ordinary work. So in the end the Land contingent died a natural death, without further notice being taken of it. Every one of us, of course, was anxious to join up, either then or later, and I suppose there were few of us who did not apply to do so. The Civil Services could not be depleted, however, beyond a certain point. Many went, and those of us who were left had double rows to hoe, doing the others' work, extending our tours beyond the normal, and working extra hard to keep things going in the next four years. We, too, had our casualties in strain of overwork, and there are some of us who carry the marks of it now.

For a while, until a company of M.I. came from Sokoto, Kano had no troops to garrison the station, or any defence except the body of Nigerian Police. Our need was not against attack by German forces, but possible disaffection in the Moslem population of Kano. There were the usual alarmist rumours flying about, but I confess I had no faith whatever in their truth. The German propaganda in Europe had a small counterpart in Africa, and it was necessary to keep an eye open

for its possible effect upon our natives. Proclamations had found their way in to Nigeria from the Cameroons, great gaudy things written in Arabic in red and gold, signed by the Kaiser, and highly coloured and got up to please a colour-loving people. They called upon the Mohammedans of Nigeria to rise against the British and fight upon the side of Wilhelm who was at heart a Moslem and their only friend—I saw some of them, and fine vote-catching things they were.

But that cock wouldn't fight. I think if ever proof had been needed of the natives' loyalty to the British, or vindication of the soundness of our policy of rule and treatment in Nigeria, we got it then in the demeanour of all the provinces in the first months of the war. The news was not too good of happenings at their very gates and away in Europe. They heard of them, of course, and often they were magnified by rumour and by this propaganda in writing, or the mouths of travellers from the north. Had they possessed a grievance or lacked real faith in us, they had their opportunities of revolt in those days. But, throughout, the attitude of chiefs and people was calm and friendly. They carried on their daily lives and work, disregarding market rumours of reverses, the coming flight of the British from Nigeria, and all the twaddle that they heard. They watched our own demeanour, and had faith in what they saw. They knew something also of the German methods of administration in the Cameroons, of the atrocities and ill-usage that went on there, and what they knew did not attract them. I recollect a much-travelled headman of carriers, who was working in my garden, telling me what he had seen in German territory. He said :

“ Here in Nigeria, if a carrier throws his load down

on the march and bolts, the white man would give him a beating, in Cameroon he would be shot dead as he ran."

Our people had few illusions as to the treatment they might expect from their German "friends," and preferred their present situation.

The majority of the peasantry knew very little about the war, and, I am sure, cared less. It did not affect them in any way, and left them undisturbed to farm and live in peace. If any did think about it at all, it was certainly on the lines of hope that we should beat the enemy, rather than to have an influx of other rulers who were likely to be worse than we were—and it would have been hard to rouse any enthusiasm among them for a rising. The real adherence came from the better classes. Emirs and minor chiefs, all the native officials now comfortably salaried and content, saw well which side of their bread was buttered, and desired to keep what they had. Many of them told me so in those days. "If we have not all the power we used to have, at least we have security and position, and the means to live. We do not want the Germans." We shall never know how many of them were secretly approached by German agents, what ears were turned to listen to promises. There were some of course, chiefly deposed and disgruntled office-holders, and the lazy idle sons of chiefs who wander about living on gifts and charity—"Kuran Fulani," as they call them—Fulani hyenas. These had nothing to do but make mischief or listen to it, and their reputation damned them from the start.

Yet as a whole, in those difficult days, when military strength was reduced to the barest minimum, when all departments, especially my own, were the mere skeleton

of what they were, the native machine worked on wonderfully well. Districts were left unvisited for long periods, all the branches of the native administration lacked a proper supervision, and much of our programme had to be curtailed ; but the taxes were collected, crime did not increase to any great extent, and the native staffs really did their best to carry on and keep things going. I think we reaped then a little of what we sowed in the beginning of our administration of Nigeria, for I realize now that things might easily have gone much more wrong than they did, slipped back farther into the old chaos, and given us a still harder job to bring them up again to level.

Trade was beginning to boom in Kano. That was another thing that helped to prevent unrest. Every one was so busy making money that they had no time nor wish to speculate as to what might be the outcome of hostilities. Kano swarmed with buyers and sellers. Cowhides and goatskins, the morocco leather known in Europe, and ground-nuts were the produce chiefly marketed for export. European firms and native traders beginning reasonably to buy the ground-nuts soon found themselves in the throes of cut-throat competition with each other. From £4 a ton—the first normal price—the ground-nuts rose little by little to over £40. The commercial world at home, as well as in Kano, seemed to have lost their heads. From 1914 to the middle of 1920 the cry was buy, buy at any price.

Enormous stocks of trade goods were sent out from Europe to tempt the natives now full of money from the sale of every kind of produce. The farmers and skin sellers from all over the north should have made huge profits as the years went by, but very soon the middlemen,

like a plague of leeches, came on the scene. Chiefly Yorubas, they started picketing the roads that led to Kano, going out 20 miles or more to intercept the countrymen coming in with their donkey loads. They pounced upon them and bought by the roadside the nuts packed in the panniers. For a ton which the European firms bought for £40, it is doubtful if the seller got more than £15. He seemed, so extraordinary is his nature, to be content with that, and turned home again. The buyers would lie freely about the proper market price in Kano, and persuade them by this means, or even threats, to put their produce on the roadside scales.

Things got so bad that the Emir made a regulation forbidding the sale of produce outside the township market. The struggle then swung to the township. European middlemen rushed into Kano, leased a trading plot, and set to work to make their profits. One man made £1000 in a season, and greater sums than this were gained by men who had none but this temporary interest in the country.

With each successive season till 1920, the mad buying of the nuts increased. It happened that I came again to Kano that year. Every one was full of money. Firms had got their produce for the home market; Syrians and native middlemen had made small fortunes; there were over three hundred Europeans and one hundred and twenty motor cars in the township. Every one was getting ready for another round, and turned up their shirt sleeves in gleeful anticipation. Arrangements had been made by firms, agents or the middlemen the previous year to buy the coming crop, paying in some cases a part in advance. The railway was

struggling to remove the balance of the last year's nuts still left in the tin stores, and returning trains brought up shoals of would-be fortune makers. The curtain rose, every one started in, the old scramble began again. Then the bottom dropped out of everything. Home markets fell with a slump. Home firms cabled the cease fire. Consternation! Kano yards piled high with sacks of ground-nuts not worth the freighting; Kano stores filled with trade goods no one would buy; Kano faces despairing. One company in liquidation, local banks nervous, sales by auction of goods and motor-cars, employés discharged, every one in confusion.

Twice a week the downward train from Kano to Lagos took scores of sorrowful and ruined middlemen, both white and black. I saw them go and frankly had no pity for them, for they had done nothing but exploit the place for their own ends, caring nothing for the country, the vast accumulation of produce which would rot there, and least of all for the producers, some of whom they left unpaid. Such as these do nothing to help or benefit a native race.

In 1914, however, all was rosy enough. Every one was occupied in lining pockets, and too busy to bother overmuch about the war, so far as it affected Nigeria. The Emirs offered money from the native treasuries as contribution to war expenditure, and later on any native who wished was invited to help privately the Red Cross Fund. They responded well enough, and in many cases the offers were genuinely made in charity to the cause. There were some methods of collection made through chiefs, ill-organized, which were distinctly dubious and amounted in the native mind to an impost. Where these were discovered, collection was naturally stopped and

money received was refunded to them. These small contretemps were instructive as showing how strongly rooted is the love of grabbing in these people, and still more how careful one has to be in giving instructions when working through native channels. Our suggestion was that any one who cared to should give a sum, however small, to the fund. In some provinces the request was made personally by a District Officer to the people themselves, which was right enough, for he could be sure they understood the object and really wished to give. In other places the request was issued through Emir and District Heads; one can imagine how it was done in some cases—rather like this: “The judge says you have all got to fork out to help the wounded. You must give 2s. each, and hurry up or there’ll be a row.” Of course there was nothing to be said, so the money was collected, and how much of it stuck to the wrong fingers would not be known.

We got the news of the M.I. being cut up from native sources. One of Vischer’s Hausa teachers heard it in the town, not as a rumour, but a definite certainty. Two days later we had it confirmed by telegram, with the names of officers killed and wounded. It is astonishing how news will travel in Nigeria, from a far-off point, in so short a time. Once I had arranged to meet another District Officer about half-way between our respective stations. We were about 130 miles apart and timed ourselves to forgather at a midway rendezvous on the morning of the fourth march, always supposing we left our stations on the same day as we agreed. When I got to my second camp, my political agent told me in the evening that I should be at the rendezvous too early, as my colleague had not got away from his station till late

the previous afternoon and was only going to do a few miles' march. When I asked him how he knew it, he said the news had just come to the village, brought by a trader. Since I had covered about 40 miles, the word had run some 90 more in two days from mouth to mouth along the road, and it was, as I eventually found, quite accurate. *Labari* (news) flashes along the big trade routes like wires, especially in the dry weather when there is constant movement going on. You will see a trader with his head load anxious to get his goods to market, starting from a village before dawn, and covering 30 miles before he halts to rest. During the heat of the day he will sleep, and getting off again in the late afternoon will do another 15 or more. At his next stopping-place he will likely find a caravan of donkeys going on by night, and they will do another 20 before the next dawn comes, finding at the travellers' camp another crowd setting forth to do another stage along the trade highway. At every gathering place the news, trivial or exciting, will be exchanged and carried on and easily in thirty hours go 90 miles. It is just the never-ending movement, not the speed per hour, which enables the word to reach so far in such a little while.

Sometimes drumming takes the story on, thumped out from town to town, down the rivers and across the hills over a wide area. Or smoke fires may do the work, more signalling than story, over great stretches of hill and bush, as when pagans call their folk to war or feasting.

Enormous distances are covered, too, by individuals on horse or foot. Before we came to Nigeria, letters used to go from one Emir to another by runners, who gained great reputations in this way. Umaru, the old Emir of Gombe, told me once he had sent some urgent

news to the then Sarkin Musulmi at Sokoto. He chose a well-trying man of his own, renowned for speed and endurance, and told him to go on till he dropped, but get the letter there in eight days. The man actually stumbled into Sokoto and fell exhausted at the palace gate an hour or two before the eighth day ended. Now from Gombe to Sokoto is just exactly 400 miles! I know Sokoto well. I know the low plateau of laterite looking down upon the river, where the town stands; I know the long, long miles of glaring roads which lead to it, covered inches deep with white and heavy sand, and I can imagine the final endeavour of those weary feet, shuffling along on that heart-breaking track which seemed to have no ending.

Horses cover useful distances too, but they do not last for many days, as a man does, and 100 miles in one day unfits them for much after. I had a message brought to me once by a mounted *dogarai* who upon the same horse covered 128 miles in twenty-four hours, a very good performance, with a heavy native saddle and 10 stone of man upon his back.

For five months I acted as Resident of Kano, and it was a strenuous time for all of us. For a few weeks the telegraph line was open night and day, and code wires used to arrive at all hours, dragging me sleepy from my bed to de-code and study their contents. They referred to the hundred out-of-the-way things we had to do in that abnormal time. The arrest of enemy aliens and their internment. There were Germans, Austrians and Turks among the trading element, who had to be roped in and guarded. One of them tried his hardest to persuade me he was a Russian, but Schmidt was not the kind of name we had much use



A KANO HORSEMAN

for in those days, so he popped in with the others ; and for the first night they were all locked up in the bungalow rest-house till we could dispose of them in more suitable quarters, and eventually all were sent to Lagos and taken to England. Control of foodstuffs in the canteens was another item of our war programme, and a defence scheme, in case of trouble from native sources, took up considerable time with the officer in command.

Mr. Gowers returned from leave at last, and I handed over affairs to him, reverting to a District Officer's duties in the Emirate Division. He was good enough, in his dry way, to say that things were satisfactory, and this from a senior whose just and helpful attitude towards young officers was well known meant much ; but I have always felt that my emerging from those troublous days unscathed by harsh criticism was due far more, than my own efforts, to the unsparing work and willing help I got from all the officers under me. At any rate we all pulled well together, and avoided the small collisions which might well have been the outcome of those trying times. We kept things going in the way of games and sport in spite of the soldiers' absence, and had our polo, golf and tennis as relaxation from the work.

I found much to do in the Emirate Division. During the upheaval caused by war and the seconding of officers, there had been a non-continuity of charge which was disastrous to efficient work, and in fact the Emirate had been left almost entirely to its own devices. The native administration had carried on as well as could be expected, but even from the office chair it was clear enough that things were going on in the districts which ill accorded with the rules and regulations.

Before I could begin my touring, however, I was

again recalled to act in charge, Gowers having to go on a commission to the south. My reign only lasted three weeks this time, for Anderson arrived and took over the province from me once more. The constant changing of officers, not merely in Kano at this time, but everywhere else, did not help the progress of administration. It bewildered the natives, and made the work of Europeans very difficult. The Government try always to keep the same staff in each province as well as they can, but there are so many factors—deaths, invaliding, retirements or transfers—which upset the calculations. Some men are lucky enough to stay in one district as long as ten years or more, and their work in one sense benefits enormously by that, for they get to know their people and district thoroughly, and get the people's confidence.

I was always a rover in Nigeria, sent all over the northern map, never to the same spot twice running, and plunged into new work, new people, new conditions with every tour. I did not mind it, and in some ways it gave me a far greater experience of the country as a whole than I should have got if I had remained settled in one province most of the time. With the exception of Yola, Muri, Ilorin and Zaria, I came to know every one of the Fulani Emirs, some of them very well indeed, and certainly my changeful wanderings gave me a sort of ability to take over, in the shortest time, the numerous native administrations which I had to deal with. One fact I learned in this way was the extraordinary similarity among them all. There were little differences to be found in each, differences in local terms, in grades of office-holders, name or precedence, but in all else they were the same. Identical in native methods, in cere-

monies, in their habits, tricks and general behaviour, so that whether some particular official was named the Wombai, Beraya, or Mijindadi, he was always inside the same skin, and one greeted him as an old acquaintance. This was an interesting proof to me how utterly conservative, and how moulded in one form, was the old Fulani system of government, and the management of the people.

I remained at my divisional work after my second ousting from the senior post until the end of that tour.

My wife came out to join me in December for the first time, and my house and entertaining took on an aspect and quality very different from the earlier months. Kano was beginning to be a great objective now that the railway came from Lagos in forty-eight hours, and visitors were many. Very few women were allowed to join their husbands in Nigeria in those days, especially in the north, and while bachelor efforts at hospitality were surprisingly good, it was equally surprising to see what a difference the feminine touch made in everything.

Among other visitors we had a number of French officers from Wadai or Zinder passing through for Lagos and France. Many were recalled before they had finished their normal stay in the French Sudan, by the great need of their country. Usually they stay out three to five years on duty, and then go home for good. These gentlemen were most precise and correct in their notions of the visit of ceremony, too much so from our point of view, for they chose the queerest hours for calling. A favourite time was 9.30 in the morning. This was generally our breakfast hour, when we were snatching food between our spells of work, and a remarkably inconvenient time to receive a call.

I see them now, immaculate in white drill suits and cotton gloves, with quaint mushroom helmets pressed down upon their ears, clumping up the gravel path to the Residency anteroom. I enter to find them, two or three drawn smartly to attention in a line, while the senior introduces himself and others with a salute. "Le capitaine Legrand . . . le lieutenant Petit . . . le docteur Moyen. Nous sommes venus, M. le Resident . . . etc. etc." We shake hands, murmuring "enchanté," and they seat themselves gingerly on chairs, to maintain a formal and desultory conversation, while I regret my interrupted breakfast.

When Anderson was the host, he being no French scholar, it was his habit to send an S.O.S. over to my house to come and support him. I would arrive to find conversation being carried on by means of bows and smiles and pidgin-English. "Tell them I am very glad to see them," Anderson would growl. Polite bows and a flow of compliments. "Ask them to have a cocktail." Gestures of horrified refusal coupled with deprecating smiles; and so we proceeded until the right number of minutes had passed, and they bowed and saluted themselves out, no doubt more than ever amazed at the habits of the English.

The Europeans in Kano, especially in the township, were increasing in numbers now, and a real attempt was made to promote closer relations in sport and games between officials and non-officials. These had not hitherto been very close, but some capital young fellows who had done their share of fighting were beginning to come out as employés of the British firms, and we mixed much more freely after work was done, starting a clubhouse and competitions in golf and tennis, which helped

to better acquaintance between us. Officials are generally accused, I think, of keeping up an attitude of reserve and seclusion among themselves, which irritates the non-official community in countries like Nigeria. The indictment has some truth in it, but there are some quite obvious reasons why there must be a certain segregation of the two social elements. Interests are bound to be different, both in work and the point of view of the country, and local interests play a very large part in daily life and conversation. There was no question of snobbishness in our minds which tended to separate us from the township. In a country like Nigeria all Europeans are on a level of good fellowship, but it is a fact that groups do form of men with common interests, and this is sure to prevent complete social fusion anywhere. But conditions since the war have vastly changed; a new spirit has touched us all, and, with the minor reservations which official as against unofficial position must always cause, every one is on much better terms than formerly.

My tour ended more quickly than I expected. I had been in Kano some thirteen months and was quite prepared for a long extension under war conditions, but while camping in a remote village on the southern border of the Emirate I had a letter from the Resident instructing me to hurry in and take my leave at once, so as to be out again in five months' time when staff would be even shorter than it was at the moment, so I returned to Kano and sailed a few days after.

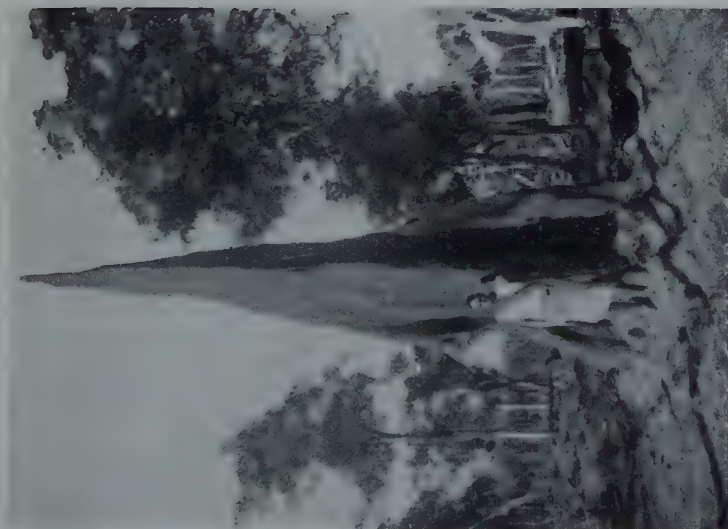
During my service I spent four tours in Kano province of which this was the second. I saw it first in 1909 as a junior, last in 1921 as a senior officer.

There have been many changes in that time, changes

as everywhere in this world, both for the better and the worse. No doubt it was more useful to travel in my rattling Ford over roads where formerly there were only bush paths, and thus save valuable time in 1921, but there was an infernal telephone on my office table then which rang at every moment, bringing messages which would not have been worth sending by a courier in 1909. The boat train, or that bi-weekly one which we used to call the "rich mixed," brings English butter, kippers and fresh fruit to Kano breakfast tables now, but it brings other things as well, which we could well dispense with. You can have "ice which gives you pain inside," and soda water in place of "Sparklet" if you like it better, and lots of other civilized things. But, for me, Kano was best as when I saw it first, two bungalows and a few mud-houses, and the M.I. mess, where the soldiers lived all in a row, in small and much resounding rooms which echoed to the shouts of masters for their bath after hard chukkers of polo. The days when offices were not so full of clerks and papers, before the archives got so numerous that (one wonders if it was coincidence) they were destroyed by the fire in the provincial office. The days when the Donisthorpe Cup was run over the stiffest of "cross-country," where the great hedges of *fitatsertsia* exuded the white poison sap, and blistered the foreheads of the sweating horses; when polo was played as a sacred rite, and none refused to play. Days when we all worked hard, played hard, lived hard and made the weekly guest-night of the M.I. mess a festival to be remembered, even though next morning sometimes brought us but a hazy memory of the night before. *Eheu, fugaces labuntur anni!* We don't seem to do the things nowadays we used to do, things such as the



THE EMIR'S PALACE



AN ANTHILL

cheery crew accomplished who sat all night in Hadeija rest-camp, playing poker till the dawn, and then went forth, blew in the gate of Hadeija town and took it by sun up. We had the youth, the health, and the high spirits which made everything a pleasure, and so we did things with a will and bothered not our heads with too much seriousness.

CHAPTER VII

TREKKING

FROM Illo, on the Upper Niger, to Lake Chad, our north-east boundary corner with the French Sudan, is full 650 miles, and from Bida straight to the northern border of Nigeria a good 300. Within the area roughly so defined there lie the great provinces of Sokoto and Kano, Bornu and Bauchi, Nupe and Kontagora, and it was in these six provinces that I lived and travelled during eighteen years.

Aggregates of any sort are apt to be astonishing. A brother officer of mine has told us in another book of the thousands of grains of quinine he swallowed in ten years. I fancy he must be adding to that total now, for he has still some years to go before retirement. I kept for many years a record of the ground I covered, and though in earlier days I trekked more constantly than at the last, for the younger officer is much more in the field than a Resident, whose office work takes up a larger portion of his time, I have travelled more than the average, in my twelve tours. Not counting journeys to and from my province, nor including rail and river transport, and at the end some motor mileage, I have ridden more than five-and-twenty thousand miles on horseback, over the northern provinces of Nigeria. Except for a few short

periods in Kano, Sokoto and Bauchi, my years were spent in out-of-the-way bush stations and their districts, where my stable has consisted of strong trek horses, not the polo ponies and racers which are useful in the more central headquarters. I owned at different times some thirty horses, bought at all ages from four to eight years, and at prices ranging from £3 to £12.

The Nigerian horse averages, I suppose, 14·1 in height or thereabouts. Sixteen hands have been known, but certainly one of 15·2 is a big horse in that country. The majority are ridden by natives at so young an age that feet and legs and mouths are often spoilt before we get them. They are as a rule light-boned, poorly ribbed up, and indifferently shouldered, the natural result of the promiscuous breeding, for no attempt is made to pick good mares and stallions so as to maintain a decent strain. Despite these drawbacks, there are some useful ones to be found, and I had several which for stamina and power more than equalled the horses I have known in North and South Africa. I took great interest in my animals, and look back with pleasure to the whole good crowd of them, glad to think that they had pleasant lives with me, and suffered no other trouble than hard work.

I cared well for their health and comfort, used them much but reasonably, and to that I owe the fact that I never lost a single one from tsetse, lung sick, or other ill, and in every case they left my hands in better fettle than they came to me. A good number I sold in early years after a tour, because it was not easy to find a brother officer to look after them till I came back, but three old favourites remained with me for many years.

Dorina, "the Hippo," a big heavy-headed black, learnt the roads and tracks of Kano, Bornu and Bauchi with me for seven years. Dan Tambawel took me round the Sokoto and Kantagora bush for five, and my best of friends, Dan Kano, a bright bay, abode with me for full ten years, and when I left Nigeria went to a brother officer, one knowledgeable in horse-craft, who will shoot him when his day is done. In our prime we have galloped countless miles together, and when we aged a bit towards the end—a quiet canter satisfied us both. Stout fellow, may his end be quick and peaceful, and may the grass in the Elysian fields of horses be green and succulent to his taste. Dorina was the lamb at all times, and after evening stables would come unhaltered to my chair for sugar, nosing round until he got it. Dan Tambawel also was a gentleman, but being younger he was full of life, needing lots of work to keep him steady. His native master, the old Sarkin Tambawel from whom I bought him, told me he used to ride him at the triple from Tambawel to Sokoto, quite comfortably in one day's light, and that is 60 miles.

Many's the time we have done our five-and-twenty together, he tripling along at 6 or 7 miles an hour cat-jumping at the end, and ready for another turn out shooting in the evening. Old Dan Kano believed not in manners in the stable. The boys had all to fend his head off with a stick while currying him, for fear of a stout nip upon their hinder ends, and cross-grained to the last he nosed my palm and tried to bite unwary fingers. Caring not for dainties or petting of any sort, he kept himself to himself, as one who knew his job and did it, but required no blandishments or attempts to get on the soft side of him. He was a real good hack.

My wife has ridden him often ; he would walk at $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour with ease, and I trained him at one time to pull my trap in single and in double harness.

In Bauchi and Bornu, where I had a lot of ground to cover, long marches and evening visits to surrounding villages, it was my habit to use four ponies, cantering the stage on two, and riding the others in the evening work. I covered a lot of country in this way, and once when assessing the Emirate of Hadeija I visited five hundred towns and villages in six weeks. Travelling in one's district was quite a different proposition to the cumbrous moving to join a province on return from leave, with all one's paraphernalia of stores and kit.

Ten or twelve carriers were all I needed when touring round, and even these seemed a lot to one who had ridden South Africa for two years with what the saddle wallets would hold ; but it was useful to have light loads so as to travel fast and far if need be, and advisable not to stint oneself of ordinary comforts in that climate. I picked my men, the strong and healthy and good-tempered, who would not grumble at extra work if put to it ; and many of them travelled hundreds of miles with me, knew my ways, were accustomed to their load, and proved themselves capital fellows in every way. They were paid 6d. a day by Government, but it was my habit to supplement their wages by presents of Kola nuts, and when in a game country I would shoot meat for them every now and then.

I travelled light. A tin bath and cover, which carried clothing, box of cooking pots, camp bed and valise, tables and chairs, canteen basket, whisky and provisions, which were chiefly tea and sugar, flour, jam and fruit, made up the list, together with an office box of books

and papers ; and if my travels were extended and I ran short of things, I sent a servant into my local headquarters for what I needed. Mostly I lived on local produce, which varied with the locality, but chickens, eggs, onions and the sweet potato were generally to be got, with beef, and goat and milk in most places. The water also varied, in the rivers and village wells. It had always to be boiled and filtered, and sometimes was a dirty colour even then. Sometimes my loads were carried by camel, bullock, or donkey pack, but as a rule I used the carrier, by far the best and quickest mode of transport. Carriers are among the best and hardest workers in the country, earning well the money they are paid. They pick up their head load of 50 lb. or more, and march their 17 to 20 miles a day. As a rule they must be left to travel in their own way, resting after two hours or so, and moving at about 3 miles an hour. In cases of necessity they can do wonderful distances, and I have pushed my gang 70 miles in two days, letting them travel when they would—entirely in the native way. They are stout fellows too, cheerful and enduring, and will troop in after a hot and weary march, lifting their loads at arm's length above their heads to ease their straining necks, their whistles piping, and themselves with sweating bodies yelling and shouting "We are coming" in defiance of fatigue and thirst.

My camps were of all kinds. Nowadays the well-cleared roads are spaced with rest-houses every 10 to 15 miles, near villages where supplies are easily procurable. A rest-house keeper meets you with a book of charges and a space for entry of the camper's name. But there was nothing of this sort at first, and off the



A REST CAMP



A WATER LANE

beaten track I settled where I could. Sometimes a shady durimi tree would serve my purpose in the dry weather, or a grass-mat shelter hastily put up to protect me from sun or wind. In the rains I used a tent, or a hut within the village would be cleared and cleaned, and some fat kicking baby removed to play in other dust, resentful at my coming. Goats and sheep would wander in and out the hut, the chickens pecked and scuttled among my loads, while dogs and donkeys, flies and fleas pursued their avocations round me regardless of the change of occupant.

I would sit at evening in the native compound, watching the glow of sunset, and listening to the sounds of village life about me. Behind the grass-mat fencing would lie perhaps the mosque. The *ladan* calls the faithful to their prayers. "There is no god but God." I bear witness that Mohammed is the messenger of God. My horses munch their corn contentedly behind the hut. I hear the rhythmic pounding of grain in some wooden mortar, the sharp-tongued voice of some woman over her cooking-pot, and the growling answer of her husband home from farming. A dim shape passes me in the dusk, bearing some milk or fowls to my waiting cook, and a whispering talk goes on around the kitchen door. The prayers end and every one departs, while silence with the stars comes over the village, broken only by the barking of a dog from far away.

Out of the scores of journeys I have made, I choose three to serve as sample of the travelling we have to do in Nigeria, and, as I write them, my memory conjures up the scene and atmosphere so vividly that I see again the glare of sunlight, smell the mud and water

of the swamps, and hear the padding of my pony's hoofs along a moonlit road.

From Geidam in Bornu I rode upon the road which leads due east to Yo, and onward to Lake Chad. The time was late October in 1913, the rainless year which brought starvation in its train, and showed that sandy country at the height of its dry misery. The rain gauge, I remember, had showed a bare 5 inches of fall in the whole wet weather season, which gave us in a normal year about 23 in. My road lay parallel with the Yo River, which curved and twisted its way to Chad; and where it touched the banks, seldom enough, the water-pools and green vegetation and trees refreshed the eye and gave a touch of coolness to the burning air. Here one could see the weighted water-dipping beams, the *shadoof* of Egypt, rising and falling all day long, to irrigate the thirsty farms of onions, cassava, indigo and other crops which lined the river's brink. The little squares of vivid green fenced in with boughs of thorn tree, the brown water gurgling and swirling along the muddy rivulets, the creak and splash of beam and goatskin water-bag were pleasant things to see and hear, as I touched upon the bank at such long intervals on the four days' march. For mostly the road dragged its weary way through sand and thorn scrub in the deadliest monotony. Away to the south the dust-laden acacia scrub stretched for miles, rising and falling in a gentle swell to a horizon unbroken by any hillock or earth mound. Above the thorn there rose the giant ant-hills or the clumps of gum acacia trees with evil bark of red or white, the only features in the dull desolation. In all that four days' ride I never saw, except along the river, one single farm of any sort of crop which had not died. The

grass-hut villages cowered miserable in the parched acres of their sowing.

The dried and stunted stalks of millet, killed by drought, stood blackened and pitiful, in height of inches where they should have towered feet. The spirit of famine seemed to crouch along the withered fields and grin at all the countryside. The sun, a blinding white halation in a blue white sky poured down upon us a heat which was more than heat, a demon sent to torture. From above he beat down heavily on head and shoulders, from the ground struck up his glaring blows. The unmoving air was saturated through and through with heat till every breath drew fire into the lungs and scorched the mouth and nostril as it passed. Sometimes this heat devil woke a dust storm to torment us further.

A tiny spiral of dusty chaff would start beside the track, dance along a yard or two, and then die down, only to spring up again and whirl off into the bush, with widening coils. Once more it would collapse, then suddenly rear up again, and come swirling down on us. From rustling murmur it grew to a rushing, crackling roar, hurling up in its vortex leaves and twigs and small stones amid the thick cloud of dust and sand. Down it came on us, filling ears and eyes and nose with prickling sand, spitting hot breath upon our hands and faces, and passed off into the bush again, swaying and thrashing among the scrub and grass, just like a living thing, and left us gasping. I never felt such heat as along that road to Chad. It was the acme of all heat, setting the whole landscape jumping and shimmering with its waves, and deadening all life beneath its hammer blows.

Hour after hour on each of the four days I rode almost in a coma, crumpled up in the saddle, watching the hellish sandy road slide past through half-closed eyes, and longing in a dull and senseless fashion for the end of it. Sometimes I saw a larger clump of trees or village huts which seemed to promise camp, and ages later reached the spot to find the accursed road still crawling on in the white heat, to my irritated disappointment. The saddle leather cracked beneath my knees, the reins became stiff wood between my dry and splitting fingers, the sweat dried off upon my horse's shoulders as he moved. The kicked up sand rose sluggish from the ground, hanging long minutes in my rear, a fog through which my followers plodded after me, their mouths and noses covered with their turban folds, in listless file.

Even the beginning of each day's march gave no relief. No dawn wind blew at that season of the *gajere*, the short hot weather, no freshness of the night remained, nothing but the hot, dry dusty smell of yesterday's inferno. Each morning I watched the sun rising with dismay, seeing on his red and angry face the threat of the burning hours to come. Four days I had of it, four repetitions of the torture kiln, hot dawn, fierce heat and glare, and breathless suffocating eve, until I had no moisture left in me, my very tissues dried and withered out.

A hell on earth is this country of Bornu under the full sun. Even the natives feel it, and sometimes they die of heat and thirst when they go far afield. Just a week or two before I went to Yo, two hunters in the bush had in their wanderings come upon the bodies of a party, three men, a donkey and a mare, and all were

dead. It seemed that bringing Bilma salt from the French country, they had wished to avoid our customs station at Arege near Chad, where they would have had to pay their dues. To escape the notice of the preventive service agents, they skirted wide of Arege and its neighbourhood, and getting deep into the trackless bush, soon lost their way. Hoping to get yet a little water in the shallow pans, which in normal years would still have had muddy dregs, they sought in all and found none in the whole expanse. Too late they turned back, making for Chad, and struggling on to the bitter end they fell and died long before their goal was reached.

At Yo, upon the river's bank, I halted for a day or two. Some years before a detachment of the M.I. had been posted there to guard the town against the Tubu raiders from the north, wild desert men of the Asben tribes, who frequently swept down to pillage the river villages. The post had been abandoned, but the officer's house was still kept up as a rest-camp, and solidly built with thick mud walls and roof, it gave me the first real coolness and protection from the glare that I had had since leaving Geidam. The house itself was perched upon a mound of sand and tiny shells, which showed that all this part was originally Chad lake bed, and years ago lay under water. The dryness of this country was most forcibly brought home to me by the words of a village headman who came from 30 miles within the borders of the French Sudan, of which the Yo River was our boundary. He told me he had not seen rain fall in his part of the world for five years, but three years before the sky had become overcast on two days. They had been full of hope, but each following morning dawned clear

again, and that had been the nearest they had ever got to rain! In common with other villages they had a few farms on the lake side, but chiefly they lived by fishing, and traded their catch, sun-dried, for grain brought up by traders from the south.

From Yo on to Lake Chad was some 10 or 12 miles more, but now the way led over ground hard baked, and cracked into a million fissures, the mud deposits of Chad water. At certain times, when a strong wind blew from the east, it drove the water over the level flats, the old lake bed, for 10 or 15 miles, at the rate of 2 miles an hour. When the wind dropped, the flow ceased, moved back again almost as quickly as it came, and left a vast expanse of oozy mud, which dried with great rapidity under the intense heat. The villagers told me that the year before the water had dropped back so quickly, they had been able to surround and kill two hippopotami, which had been left stuck in the thick mud, and could not lumber out in time to save themselves.

I had no time to linger on Chad, and soon set out on my return to Geidam. On the road up I had had to move by day to visit all the villages *en route*, but the journey back I made by night, and, though there was little comfort in the warm stagnation of the dark, at least I missed the glaring purgatory of my outward march.

Another journey which I made from Hadeija to Katagum in the Kano province was so utterly different to that across the grilling Bornu sand that one might well describe it as a voyage, not a trek. Towards the end of a heavy rainy season I rode into Hadeija and there found a brother officer named Backwell with whom I



ON TREK

was to travel on to Katagum, 20 miles away. The whole country between these towns was under water, for it was the swampy bush which lay between the Hadeija and Katagum rivers and extended to the angle of their junction to the north. The rest-camp sat upon a sandy ridge looking down upon the swamps, and as evening drew on the wild-fowl in their thousands began to move and circle on their feeding grounds. Seldom have I had such comfortable sport, for from the rest-camp wall I shot fifteen couple of teal and duck in under an hour, and chose my birds.

We started at the first light of a cool clear morning, with a fresh breeze from the north blowing away the early mists. From the camp we looked eastward to where the Hadeija River ran in flood, the nearer bank still well defined, the farther one now covered by the brown swirl of water which spread into the bush beyond our sight. Our horses and the unwanted loads were to take another route which, going south and east along two sides of a square, was longer than our own, but gave the only line for horses, which could be led unriden through the mud and pools ; and after starting them upon their way, we set off ourselves and walked down to the river brink. Here we found a group of thirty or forty men, naked except for the small loin cloth, busied with what looked like pumpkins of enormous size. These were the huge gourds which are grown in farms along the river for the purpose of ferrying streams and travelling through the water bush. They stood some 2 ft. 6 in. in height, with a circumference of 7 or 8 feet, and through a hole cut in the top the inner green pulp had been scooped out, and the skin or shell left to dry until it became hard. It then became as light and buoyant as

a balloon, and would support a man in the water comfortably.

Some of the men were amusing themselves with a form of water-play. They first waded out some feet into the river, pushing the gourd in front of them, then jumping up and forward lay upon it, with nicely calculated balance, their stomachs covering the vent hole on the top. Paddling out with hands and arms, like a dog swimming, they began to make the gourd revolve slowly at first, then faster and faster till they had enough momentum, and stretching arms and legs flat and clear of the water they would go spinning down the stream until the rotation stopped. These gourds carried one man each in this way, but if two had to be ferried over, such as women or old men who could not face the current, the gourd was plugged with a stout wooden peg some 3 feet long. The passenger and ferryman entered the water with the gourd between them, and clung facing each other to the peg, thus maintaining a balance, while the one who did the work and steered to the farther shore, used his legs and one hand to get across. I have seen many pairs travel over half a mile in this way, the woman looking very nervous and the man exhorting her not to be afraid, a thing she might well be if she could not swim, since if she were to loose her hold upon the peg, she would be whirled away fast enough down the swirling river, and possibly be drowned before the gourd man could get after her.

However, it appeared that these aquatic efforts were not required of us on this occasion. Subsequently I did try my hand upon the one man gourd, but found the getting on was not at all easy, and, when helped up on to it, it was still more difficult to keep on and maintain

a balance. Backwell and I were to make the journey more comfortably. A platform of thick guinea-corn stalks, some 8 feet by 4 feet, was made and lashed upon two rows of gourds, and on this raft-like structure we stepped gingerly, sitting cross-legged like two tailors one behind the other. A second raft was used for our few essential loads to be carried over the deep water, where the carriers would swim or be taken across on other gourds.

Our dreadnought, carried down the bank and launched upon the stream, was at once surrounded by twenty lusty youths who were our engine power, and the word given, all struck out into the racing torrent pulling or pushing the raft with one hand and paddling furiously with the other. Away we went down and across the stream in a spray of splashing arms and legs and a din of yells and salutation. "Toron Giwa" (bull elephant), all is well, we cross in safety . . ." "Lion, may God prolong your life, fear nothing, we approach." It struck me, huddled on our platform, that anything less like lions and bull elephants than Backwell and I looked in our ludicrous position, would be hard to find, but I regarded with outward calm and such dignity as was possible the grinning, cheery faces of our noisy but earnest crew, and encouraged them with greetings in their work. Presently, like some gigantic swimming beetle, we swung over the submerged farther bank, where for a while the men found footing, and standing chest-deep in the swirling water, began to push and pull us into the flooded bush, through trees and undergrowth which marked the river's edge. In and out we went, now rounding a thick clump, now forcing our way through reeds and floating snags. It was the queerest

kind of travelling, moving slowly over the thick and muddy water, and trying to imagine what the country would look like when the floods subsided.

Before long the water deepened again, but became more sluggish, the influence of the river scour now left behind us. Our way lay out upon great still lagoons dotted with tree-tops and islets of muddy ground. The depth below us varied from 5 to 20 feet or more, according as the land rose into ridges or sloped away into basins of the swamp. Our fellows, wading and swimming alternately, kept up a fire of chattering and salutation to each other, the head of them constantly bawling, "The white men salute you, O youths, work on with zeal," to which they chorused, "We work, we work." Our pace was very slow, for there was more swimming done than wading, and the hoists and turns were many when we struck large patches of tree-tops interlocked or belts of heavy reeds. At several points we crossed currents of fast-flowing water which showed where stream beds lay, and once we came to where all the water rushed and eddied in one direction, some swift tributary of the Hadeija River pouring down to join it. At midday we saw a solitary mound of sand and silt lying 6 feet or so above the water, about an acre in extent, where two compounds of fishing folk stood lonely in the waste of waters. We halted here to stretch our legs, and lunch off biscuit and cold tongue, while the men rested half an hour from their labours.

We had been travelling for five hours, and had made perhaps 4 miles—not more. Our men denied fatigue, for that is the native way. When one asks him, "Kagaji?" he replies, "Babu gajia," no tiredness, and

it must be an exhausted man indeed who will confess to some slight feeling of weariness. In this case they had a lot left in them evidently, for when I signalled for departure they all ran up with alacrity, and carrying the raft across the mound launched it on the other side ready for the next stage, and when we climbed aboard they started off as fresh as ever, both in limb and voice. From that time on they swam and walked through the water for over seven hours, with two hard struggles crossing river beds, and once at least a swim of over a mile on end. In all that time they rested only twenty minutes while we boiled a pot of tea upon another islet and speedily pushed on, for day was ending and we still had some way to go.

We were to camp the night at Sabongari, a largish village set upon a ridge, and still there seemed no sign of it across the waters. In its due time the sun went down and left us floating on in the afterglow, the men more silent now, and we most amazingly stiff and cramped from our long sitting. Before the dark came down the full moon arose, a huge and friendly lamp to light us in, and soon after we saw, in silhouette against his orb, the ridge rise up, capped with a row of hut roofs, which gave sign of the journey's end. A mighty fire was spouting flames high into the air, marking the landing-place, with dark figures moving to and fro across it. It promised warmth and comfort to our chilled and dithering crew, whose bodies must have been nearly waterlogged after that long immersion. All were wading now, and, with redoubled shouting, pushed the gourd boat till it grounded at the mouth of a long lane of muddy water, only a few inches deep, running up between tall reeds to where the bonfire

roared. Cramped and stiff we both stepped off the raft, which had by now begun to come to pieces after the hours of tugging and thrusting, and plashed our hobbling way along the passage, till we gained dry land, camp chairs, and a most welcome drink.

We sat and listened to our chattering crew, who squatted round the blazing fire devouring huge quantities of food, and making naught of that queer amphibian journey, twelve solid hours of long continuous effort across the inundated bush. There would be more to do to-morrow ere we finished with the water march, but they gave no thought to future labours, and very soon the snores of these quaint fishermen showed that they were sleeping as heartily as they had worked.

It was when I was a junior officer at Gombe that I had a chance to go to my provincial headquarters at Bauchi and talk over some matters with the Resident. As time was short he asked me to hurry through the 75 miles which lay between the stations, promising to send a couple of ponies from his end as relays to do the last 15 miles. It was the dry weather season then, and a three-quarter waning moon would light me for the greater part of the night, therefore I determined to do the first 60 miles at a fairly easy pace, at walk and canter, and cover it in one night. I sent two ponies forward to await me at the twentieth and fortieth mile that morning, and a canteen basket with some food to the first halt, meaning to leave next day at evening when I had squared up the work on hand. My grooms would start each stage with me and pick up later the horses as I left them in the village headman's charge.



CAMEL TRANSPORT

On the next afternoon about five o'clock I started on my biggest horse, old Dexter. I needed a strong trekker, for the first stage lay along the Gongola River where the road was heavy with sand nearly all the way. I rode light, without even a water bottle, for I have always found that the more one drinks the more one wants, and one does better without it. Matches and tobacco in one breast-pocket of my khaki shirt, and in the other a handful of almonds and raisins, which I always found an excellent sustainer for a long march, and that was all I needed for the night. So we took the road, going easy at a walk in the last heat of afternoon. Through sunset and the twilight we ambled on waiting for the night cool and the evening breeze. The stars popped out in the blue-black vacancy, first the great lamps of heaven, then the lesser lights filling in the blanks with quiet suddenness, and last the star dust of the Milky Way was powdered across the arc above me. Clear starlight of the tropics showed me well enough the sandy track, and shaking Dexter up I pushed on in a good stretching canter for half an hour, slithering down into the shallow gullies, climbing down the steep ones. The old horse lolloped along swishing his great tail, enjoying the spin, and when at last I eased him, pulled up reaching at his bit and ready to go forward still.

With resting, walk and canter we covered the ground, averaging 7 or 8 miles an hour, passing through the villages of Kunde and Golo, where barking dogs rushed out to snap at our flying heels. So quickly did the minutes pass that before I expected it I sighted the cook fire and the chair set out for me at Kefin Iya, where I was to eat, and found I had done the 20 miles quite comfortably in the three hours.

I off-saddled, and stabled Dexter under a tree with a good feed of guinea-corn, the while I myself ate cold chicken, bread and tinned fruit, and washed it down with whisky and water. A little later I got upon my second pony, and leaving Dexter, who stopped his feeding to stare after us and whicker in farewell, rode down the river bank and out across the pale white sands of the Gongola. The moon was rising, the rays lit up the still clear river pools, the grey rocks lying in fantastic shapes, and showed the track across the sands pitted with the passage of a thousand feet and hoofs. The scene had a solemn beauty in its silence and its colour, and as I climbed the far bank and looked back at Kefin Iya, the last flicker of the now dying fire winked a "bon voyage" at me across the white and silver of the river-bed.

The road wound first among the farms of maize and catch-crops on the flats, then mounted with a steady rise for several miles out of the Gongola Valley, and again we took it easy, but moving at a good fast walk upon the firmer ground, and then topping the rise set off at a strong gallop through a country that was a park-like fairyland. Great trees of tamarind and locust bean, with here and there a baobab or gutta-percha tree, were scattered everywhere upon a sward that looked a lawn in the bright moonlight. Others close at hand barred the road with heavy shadows like sleepers on a railway track, and like a track the road lay out ahead, quite straight and visible for a long way in that clear countryside. We went fast. My second horse was young and full of energy, the miles went slipping past, and in two bursts of galloping we must have gone 8 miles. Later we pulled up to a triple going dot-and-carry,

dot-and-carry, along the easy road. Everywhere a wonderful stillness now. The only sound to hear was the quick, soft padding of the pony's feet. The countryside was sleeping in the soft and windless night, and only we two seemed living upon that lonely road. My chief memory of it is of the blue-white silence of a dream, wherein we rode for ever forward in a country of the dead.

Then far off along the road I saw the huts of a wayside hamlet, which seemed to move at us with phantom quickness, and as I passed it I heard the sleepy wail of some small baby and a mother's voice hushing it again to rest.

The spell was broken, and I cantered on out of the parkland into scrubby bush with bold hills outlined on either hand and meeting ahead across the road. Rough going now, with half an hour spent winding in and out among worn rocks and scrambling up to the top of the pass. I halted here, slacking the girths, and seated on a flat grey stone I smoked and let the pony nibble round a bit. The scene was perfect. Two hundred feet below the bush spread out before me, unbroken by any village clearing, solemnly quiet beneath the high moon sailing above. Another range of hills some 10 miles off lay across the path I was to follow, and again beyond, a dim blue outline spoke of others to be crossed. The white road falling steeply at my feet meandered out and hid itself among the trees which fringed a stream bed, then showed again, once more twisting like a white snake into the scrub. Girths tightened, I set off again, and on the level pushed on quickly to my next change post, reaching it an hour later, to find my groom alert and saddling up at the sound of our approach. I did not

linger here, but got upon my way at once refreshed by the new horse moving under me. It was two o'clock, with 45 miles covered, so that I had comfortable time to reach Jinkiri by dawn. I must have dozed a bit for the first few miles, for several times I opened my eyes with a start and sense of falling, and the last time found myself among low foothills and the track mounting.

My third horse was a staid old goer, content to plod along untended, and always steady on his legs. To rouse myself I finished up the remainder of my raisins, and up and down, through and round the hills we went, getting a short canter in the valleys till the belt was passed and we had level road before us once again. Mile after mile we kept slogging on, in rather dull monotony of bush, and then I saw the hills of Jinkiri River, and knew that dawn also was not far off. The air had taken on the sharpness of morning chill and was faintly stirring to a breeze. Another mile or so, and in the east Gamzaki the morning star was placed on the horizon, rising steadily; then below him spread the white dawn ever broadening, and mingling with the moonlight began to kill it with every wave. I rode slowly down towards the river, a trifle weary now and shivering in the early chill. In that strange half-light I saw the village compounds and the river streak below. The cocks were crowing to the morning, folk were astir, blue smoke was drifting up from cooking fires, as from beneath the village gathering tree a group came out to greet me and give welcome. Rather stiffly I got down, and resting there, before the last lap in, I fortified myself with milk, raw eggs, and whisky from a flask, just noting that the 60 miles were done in ten hours and fifteen minutes actual riding



THE NIGERIAN BUSH

These are the samples of the travelling we did and still do over country far removed from motor roads and railway. It is not always interesting, and often there are very real discomforts. There is a monotony, too, about long sandy roads, or paths which wind for hours through orchard-like bush which never seems to change, a kind of on and on for ever feeling which tires the spirit just as much as sun and glare and dust. Camp life, too, has its disadvantages, little irritations which are trying. A scarcity of fresh food, bad water, even lack of water; your last tumbler is smashed by a careless servant, or he tells you calmly that you have no more whisky, tea or sugar left, 100 miles from anywhere; the rains pour down into your leaky hut, tornados crash their way over you and wreck your camp, and riding through swamps waist deep for hours is no fun.

But trekking is the soul of life out there. It makes for health and hardening, it gives us constant change of scene which is refreshing, and adds each day to our experience. More than that, it is the essence of our work in Nigeria. The closer personal touch with native life, the real acquaintance with native thought and feeling, is only got by moving constantly among the villages, and three months of travelling is worth a year of office work.

As for discomforts, they vanish quick enough if one is fit and strong. The long march in furnace heat ends with bath and breakfast. Drowned like a rat in an hour's heavy rainstorm, you dry yourself out before a roaring fire and laugh at earlier misery. For if you have the love of it, the joy of early mornings in a rain-washed air, the evening cool when the sun has gone, and all the incidents

which the day has brought, you will want the trek life, and in the dry nights you will sleep out under the stars, the clear air all around you with Orion's belt crossing the whole arc above, a sure clock to time your rising for another march.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NIGERIAN

I USE the word Nigerian in a collective sense when attempting to describe their character, but the people of the north must be divided distinctively into groups, Fulani, Hausa, Kanuri and pagans, each with the differences of their social grade. The Hausas have a *Kirari*, which is a sort of ironic description of certain characteristics in each race, and goes thus : "The Hausa is full of charity, is unsurpassed in trading, he obeys the law, and is resigned to the will of God . . . the Kanuri is always reading the Koran, is full of polite greeting, but very willing to sponge on others . . . the Fulani is a good herdsman, likes living in a large house, travels far to salute his kin, but never takes a present with him . . . the pagan makes a promise and fulfils it." It is an apt description, and one might add to it that the Hausa is a cheerful pleasure-loving fellow, who enjoys sights and shows and stories, the Fulani is close mouthed and crafty, the Kanuri stolid, and the pagan candid and outspoken.

I thought I knew a lot about these folk, in my first twelve months. They seemed quite simple, easy to read, and more than easy to handle as soon as I should get to know their language thoroughly—I didn't know half as much about them after three or four years, and

I saw there was yet a lot to learn ; even in eighteen years I had not learned it all. Simple, open, childlike one moment, tortuous, cunning and intriguing the next, they made me realize despairingly how constantly wrong were my conceptions of their nature.

My real error lay in crediting these children of Africa with a stability of mind which they have not got. They are so swayed by the interests of the moment, the fears or hopes of a day, and they so rarely look beyond it. The Nigerian is complex in his simplicity, unsophisticated in his cunning. If you begin to credit the artless statement of one, it is more than likely you will presently discover a hidden reason which led up to it, yet when you seek a deeper motive behind another's words it is not there, and you are at fault again. Amazing people, provoking all our senses, anger, despair, surprise and laughter, and calling for all the patience that is in us !

Among the better classes of the Hausa and Fulani, dignity of manner, politeness, and observance of ceremony are outstanding features, whether among themselves or in their dealings with Europeans. An Emir or a minor chief will meet a District Officer gravely and sedately, removing his shoes, and handing his staff of office to an attendant at the right moment before shaking hands with the customary greetings. Invited to the audience room, he enters, followed by such counsellors as is the custom, and seats himself upon his rug or carpet gracefully, the others settling down behind him. No matter of business is touched upon for several minutes, compliments and salutations being first exchanged, and when at last affairs are mentioned it is not the Emir who begins, for politeness forbids he should break the ice, or

start a discussion. I open the ball perhaps with some allusion to the taxes, and it is curious to see the change which comes over them. Gone are the smiles and pleasant words of compliment, and in their place comes attention and watchfulness, generally with acquiescence in what I am saying.

This is the keynote of our converse. I put a question to the Emir, "Will it be best to do this or that?" At once I see him and his advisers puzzling to discover, from my face or voice inflexion, what I think about it. Possibly I have an open mind and show it, so they are relieved, and tentatively propose something. Perhaps I don't show anything, and the Emir, eyeing me rather nervously, replies, "Abinda ka che," which is "whatever you say yourself"—a rather exasperating reply, because it shows either that he has not thought about it or means to give nothing away, and so contribute nothing useful to our debate. In fact this answer, and another, "Hakkanan," implying hearty agreement with what one has said oneself, are the two great stumbling-blocks in all our dealings. A late Emir of Kano Abbas used this word so constantly that he was nicknamed by it among us; and when old "Hakkanan" used to interview me in my house the constant repetition of the word in his mouth made it hard for me to conceal my amusement, and I would take him round my garden, where the old gentleman—an ardent farmer—was happy among growing things and, relieved from boring details of administration, spoke intelligently.

They are not all so sycophantic or fearful of speaking out. Some do express opinions frankly, and give real constructive views on subjects, will even disagree or suggest a better line of action than the one proposed,

and this refreshing attitude is attended with perfect courtesy and repose.

These are the real forthstanding characters, such as one can find in any race, men of confidence in themselves and their capacity, restrained but insistent on their point, excellent material to work with; and you find them in every class, chief or carrier, judge or messenger, as the case may be. A few, less balanced, are outspoken enough, but their views are of the "off with his head" description, given without thought or grasp of the matter under discussion. One old chief I knew would go bundling into a debate like a bull in a china shop, and make the most startling suggestions. He was never afraid of speaking, the trouble was to make him talk sense.

Far and away the honestest, though less intelligent in one way, are the pagans. Old Sarkin Dass, the chief of a little independent enclave in a Fulani Emirate, where the hills rise sheer from the plain in peaks and cathedral spires, was a typical character. He was the image of Old King Cole in the children's book, fat, jolly, old soul, and an autocrat among his people. He made no bones about saying what he thought at any time. When I once told him that his revenue collection was delayed and I wanted it finished in a week, he shook his head vigorously, "We are having a big beer-drinking now the harvest is in. It's as much as my job is worth to bother my people for the next ten days, but I'll have it in by the end of the month"—and he did. Another time I asked him if he would let a rascal chief, deposed from office in another part of the country, sit down in his territory as an ordinary farmer. "Not much," he said, "I know all about him; he would have my



A NIGERIAN

people by the ears in a week." Pagans are straightforward, guileless people. They are often touchy, quick-tempered, and obey, not written laws, but their tribal customs which take their place. Generally thick-headed, it takes some time to teach them, but once they understand what is required of them they do it honestly and without fuss.

I had two native treasuries once at my headquarters, one of a Fulani Emirate, the other of a pagan state. The two treasurers were a contrast. The Fulani wrote a good round hand in Roman character, his account books were beautifully kept, and he has mastered all the difficulties of various classes of receipts and expenditure. No blots or erasures marred his ledgers. They were the perfection of neat and scholarly work. My pagan friend, however, produced for weekly inspection an effort that a board schoolboy would have been ashamed to own to. It was so hideous to look at, and so muddled and incorrect, that only extreme patience on my part, and his own painfully obvious attempts to improve, prevented my releasing him for other and more simple work, a release which I am sure he would have welcomed. The Fulani was smilingly contemptuous of his colleague's intelligence, but the smile was on the other face ere long. The day of reckoning came, the day of checking books and cash to see if they should tally. It was a time of affliction and anxiety for the treasury staffs, who were heartily relieved when it was over. The Fulani's superiority in bookkeeping had not extended to the keeping of his cash inviolate. He was £12 short, trusting to have repaid the money so lightly taken before the check. The pagan and I, with tears and tribulation evolving order out of

chaos in his cash book, produced a total which tallied rightly with the cash under his charge. Stupid he was, but he had kept a jealous eye and honest hand upon the bags.

Nigerians as a whole are naturally cheerful and good-tempered. Children of the sun, they are never cast down for long by adversity or sorrow, and soon regain their spirits. They mourn death, the men stolidly, the women violently with loud outcry and dust upon their heads, yet it is but a little while before you see the mourners carrying on their daily life, and chattering as gaily as before. Rather curiously, as babies they are solemn, with a gravity rare among European mites. They cry far less, however, and will endure discomfort more manfully. Tied upon their mothers' backs they travel for hours, the hot sun scorching little heads which loll and roll from side to side upon the march—and make no plaint where white babies would roar. They make less noise at play, and stare like little graven images, clasping their fat stomachs, at the passers-by; but babyhood left behind, they grow up bright and cherry, more ready to smile than frown. The high ranks put on a dignity which permits not of unseemly mirth, but the rank and file enjoy life to the full, unburdened with the cares of yesterday or to-morrow.

They rarely cherish rancour, though sometimes a man denounced by his fellow will attempt to give him away also in quick revenge. Antagonists of yesterday, in fight or litigation, will meet to-day the best of friends. Debtor and creditor, master and dismissed servant, or any who have had some cause of disagreement, seem quickly to forget past troubles, treating them as though they never were. Scallywag employés of my own, or

native officials, whom I have dismissed or sent to prison, have greeted me, months later, with beaming faces of recognition as though I were their greatest benefactor, as perhaps I was. We of the north used to hear tales of cooks in Southern Nigeria who tried to poison their masters, or treat their stews to a dash of ground glass, cherishing revenge for real or fancied wrongs. We heard of queer things done by ju-ju's agency, and of murders long premeditated. But our folk do not favour that sort of thing. There are murders enough, and woundings and bad turns are done, but in quick anger, not in the spirit of underhand revenge.

On the other hand, petty intrigue is in their blood, they seem to love it. They start away to gain some object or other and at once they map out a scheme. It is not deep laid or even well thought out, for they don't go deeply into anything. An Emir wants to put a favourite into some vacant post. His nominee may be no better or no worse than any other, but merit becomes a minor consideration. He makes his own suggestion, and at the same time sees to it that the Resident gets reports of the misdeeds of other candidates, while he says not a word himself against them. I have listened to scores of such tales, poured into my ears by men who tried to impress me with the fact they had no axe to grind, but wished only to help me. These interviews were amusing enough, because it was wonderful that they could believe we should accept their statements with such perfect faith. All they hoped for, I expect, was that some grains of doubt or suspicion would stick in our minds, and help to gain their object. An Emir's death and question of succession always brought an outcrop of intrigue. I knew a case of difficult succession,

where two factions spent weeks in stultifying their opposing nominees, and giving futile reasons why their choice was the right one. Then they grew weary of delay, and tried to hasten matters on. Some one stole the Union Jack from the Residency at night, and hid it in a crevice of the river bank. Suspicion was then carefully directed to the other side as the perpetrators of this awful deed, in the puerile hope that this would damn their rival's claim ! Even in the smallest things they delight to approach objectives from an angle, to make a business of it, instead of going right to the spot. Their desire may be a perfectly harmless one, but the means of attaining it must be indirect to please them, and I suppose, to them, it really seems the most likely way.

Except at such times when they have a particular object to serve, the native will not willingly give his fellow away to a European. He is excellent in this. There is, no doubt, a touch of the schoolboy element of banding against the master, but he really has the sporting feeling against getting another into trouble, and he will resist most manfully any attempt to make him disclose knowledge of a damaging kind. They are no tale-bearers either of the doings of other white men. Of course we don't ask natives' opinion on other Europeans ; that is most distinctly " not done." In cases where Europeans, usually non-official, are suspected of offence against the law or regulations, we have to make inquiries ; but, unless we ask specifically, we shall hear nothing. Once I followed a non-official white man along a main road for several marches. Other business prevented, till I reached the third camp, my asking the village head whether the traveller in

front of me had paid adequately for his supplies. He had not paid at all, and to my annoyance even my native staff, who had known it all along, had never told me. They, it seems, have their etiquette in this matter, as we have ours, and one that disarms reproof. Considering their lack of education and mind training, the Hausa and Fulani are really intelligent. Before the Education Department started its provincial schools and trained boys to read and write and figure in the Roman character, we had to use the material there was, among the scribes whose learning was most elementary. They could write, of course, only Arabic, or Ajami, the Hausa language in Arabic character, their arithmetic was laborious and inefficient, while accuracy, either in writing letters or keeping accounts, was deplorable.

With reforms in all branches of administration speeding up more and more each year, and constant expansion going on at equal rate, we were hard put to it to find the necessary staff. The aptitude even of the earlier *maallams* was remarkable, and the way they picked up the new and entirely strange methods of our work was most creditable. Enormous patience was required, and any amount of supervision, but the young men of that time tided us over the first years admirably on the whole. The new generation are learning fast. They pick up knowledge in every branch, and become proficient to a certain point. They become fair though not excellent masons, carpenters and mechanics, and, on the scholastic side, draughtsmen, mathematicians and writers. Above all, the natural memory of those who cannot write or read is wonderful. Members of a native staff can recall clearly happenings of years back,

and are as reliable as an office diary. Village history comes down from mind to mind for several hundred years, and probably hardly varies in its passage. Your horse-boy will travel all over Nigeria with you, and tell you the name of every kind of tree you meet, every fruit, and all the different sorts of grasses in the road. I wonder how many youths could do the same in England. Certainly there will be limits, perhaps lower than our own, beyond which they will not go. But the native mind is capable of great expansion, and only time is needed for their better knowledge.

It is hard for natives to understand our point of view : why we should do this and that, or object to something else which to them is the most natural thing in the world ; but the unexplainable is comfortably covered in their minds by the reflection that all white men are mad. They are getting used to us now, but for years it was a marvel to them that we did not spend the revenue on our own personal needs, and the fact that we don't accept bribes to do them favours is still almost as much a mystery as it used to be. Physical exercise is another sign of our oddity, and to ride and run about at polo and tennis seems to them the height of foolishness, when we might be lazing about at ease. "Aikin kwolo" and "aikin tennis," work "with the ball," and "tennis work," is their term for it. Even in Europe lots of people used to wonder why others liked to hit a little ball away into the distance and spend the rest of the day looking for it, so there is perhaps reason for a small stolid black boy carrying clubs to wonder why his master likes to lash savagely at a golf ball, lose it, break a club and swear madly at all the world. Perhaps he thinks we are paid for doing it !

They are shrewd observers of the more obvious points of our characters. They mark at once the salient features of disposition, habit or physical appearance, and size them up in some expressive word or phrase, photographic in its appositeness. We discourage now the open use of these nicknames in speaking to Europeans. At one time a messenger, for example, would tell you, quite respectfully, that "Berkono" was approaching to have speech with you. Now "berkono" is pepper in the Hausa tongue, and is used genetically of all who are quick and peppery in temper. In all cases the name was well applied. Others of the same kind were "ruan zafi," hot water; "danyen kasko," unbaked pot; "mai lafia," the easy-going one; "dan trofo," staid old man. Personal appearance was easy of description: "dogo," the tall one; "mai ja'n Kai," the red head; "mai farin kai," the white-haired. Peculiarities: "maidubi," wearer of eyeglasses; "mai gunduma," bearer of walking-stick; "mai yisheru," one who cried "Be quiet."

Men to be careful with, men who never showed their mind, men who chopped and changed, those who were mean or generous, easy or difficult to understand, all had their special designation. Some like "dogo ba hankali," the tall one without sense, were frankly disrespectful, and I am sure there were scores of others we never heard of which no doubt were far more personal and unpleasing. But those we knew were apt enough, and showed much ability in discrimination.

Patience, persistence and endurance are all marked characteristics of Nigerians. They must have needed them in the bad old days of extortion and ill-treatment. A litigant waits days and weeks to have his case heard at

some native court, while further evidence is sought. A busy morning in a District Officer's court keeps scores of them sitting stolid in the sun, only to return next day, their case unfinished. I have known men follow a stolen mare or donkey for weeks until they find its whereabouts, and apply to the nearest court for help in its recovery. Their whole scheme of life helps them in their patience. All time is before them. Except at farming season, they are not busy, and are masters at doing nothing, quite contented to draw meaningless scrawls in the dust and chatter aimlessly.

In pain and sickness they are patient and uncomplaining. To see a man with foot ravaged by guinea-worm, making his way along an endless road without a groan or murmur of his pain, is to see endurance at its best; and many a carrier struggling on the last hot miles of his journey, his neck aching with the weight and weariness of the load he bears, but forcing a cheerful grin in answer to my greeting, has always gained my admiration of his pluck. Even though they don't feel pain and fatigue as much as we do, they have their trials and bear them well. Our civilization brings them many gains no doubt, but it has the effect of lessening the virility of those who adopt it too quickly or wholeheartedly.

Some Haruna of the north or Ojo of the southern parts aspires to greater things. He dons a pair of trousers and a coat, sometimes indeed his tailoring is far better than my own. He enters officialdom or a white man's trade, eats food from tins and drinks his liquor from a bottle.

Much of his strength and fine endurance goes with the new habit he has put on. He wears a helmet to protect



ONE OF THE OLD SCHOOL



THE MAALLAM

him from a sun which had never harmed him through all the centuries ; he shivers in the wind of harmattan. He runs to hospital for the smallest ill, and finds, like many of his European friends, much comfort in the pill or bottle from the dispensary. He does not care to stride out upon the road as his father did, but needs a hammock, horse or bicycle to bear him on the journey, and with hand held piteously to head or stomach makes much of ailments which would have been ignored before, or suffered gamely. It is not his fault. He has been pampered and is no longer armed by the healthy simplicity of his former life against fatigue or illness.

The Moslem code inculcates charity, and these people both publicly and privately are charitable. The halt and blind, the beggars at the gate lack not their alms, and hospitality is given to those who ask it. They lend and borrow freely, but do not press unduly for repayment. Usury is forbidden by the code, but among all classes this goes on freely. A proverb widely says, "Wanda ya chi ramchen shinkafa, nasa sai ya chi," which is—"Who eats of borrowed rice, eats his own," foretelling ultimate repayment and beggary, but they are so improvident that they disregard all warning, and can always find a lender to their hand. A wages day among soldiers, police or the servant class, invariably shows debtors and creditors settling their affairs, and almost immediate reborrowing. The bigger men are lavish in the entertainment of their friends, and in the exchange of presents, and among all classes the occasions of naming children, marriages and so on give rise to hospitality often on a scale beyond their means. Generosity and good feeling, with willingness to help each other in

adversity, are marked characteristics of all sections of the natives.

In curious contrast to this, they are, as a whole, extraordinary callous to pain in others. One cannot say that they are thinkingly cruel and harsh, but they have an animal indifference to discomfort which does not touch themselves. Their treatment of animals is deplorable. The bridles for their horses are the epitomy of disregard of torture. The Sura pagans ride their ponies bareback, but leave an open wound upon the back to help their seat. Sore back and withers, girth galls and lameness in camel, horse or donkey cause no sense of pity or attempt to ease the pain, except in the most casual way ; and to see a servant tie some chickens on a load, leaving them to hang head downwards for hours, is to realize that they neither think nor care for the sufferings of the wretched birds. Try as we may to stop it by punishment or teaching, we make no impression on their minds in this ; they simply cannot understand our point of view, and think us foolish to bother over it.

An anecdote or two may help the reader to see the Nigerians and their ways better than I have described them.

Here is the story of a bland Fulani rascal who struggled manfully with me to get out of paying his just dues. It is a good example of their methods. It was the season of Jangali, the payments of the cattle tax. Collection of the tax itself gave little trouble, but the counting of the cattle was hindered in every conceivable way by the rascal owners, who did their utmost to evade, by all their cunning arts, the rendering of true numbers. Among them all, no man, I think, surpassed one Abdal-

lahi of the Sullebauwa Fulani, a plausible and wily rogue of ingratiating manner, whose tricks and ingenuity were remarkable, and usually successful.

Behold him, then, upon a certain day, squatted before the official table in my camp, facing the inevitable demand that he should declare his cattle, and all prepared to battle for his property. Upon his face there lies a look of bland and childlike innocence, and hidden in his mouth he has a written charm to assist him in deceiving his inquisitor.

“Your name is Abdallahi dan Namoda ?”

“Lion, it is so.”

“How many cattle have you this year ?”

“I have seventeen head in my camp, close by, and other seven feeding in the bush. Also there are six very young calves. Does that not make thirty in all ?”

“So far your addition is correct, and the remainder ?”

“Lion, that is all I have.”

“No truth can be looked for from a herd owner’s mouth at Jangali time. Let us proceed.”

“Of a truth there are no others, except two which are dying. I did not count those.”

“And the rest.”

“Wallahi, that is all. Also I have but lately paid my tax upon them, to the Emir’s collector.”

“Your receipt ?”

“Lion, it is here.” A grubby paper is slowly extracted from his gown, and handed up.

“But this receipt shows forty cattle paid for.”

“Sir, since payment, five have died of the lung sickness, one a lion took, two have strayed, and other two were sold, so I have lost heavily.”

"I see an alteration has been made in the Arabic year upon this paper. Who did that ?"

"Lion, who would dare to tamper with a Government paper ?"

"Truly, Abdallahi, you are a liar and a false man. See you that this paper is of a blue colour. That is for last year. For this year the Governor has ordained that a red paper shall be used."

"Lion, I hear." Quite unabashed, Abdallahi bows gravely, preparing for the second round.

"We will proceed. My counting men have brought me word that you own two hundred and eighty-two head of cattle. Explain."

"They have brought you false report, wishing to do me injury. Is not Ali among them, he who is angered against me, for that I did refuse to bribe him with a heifer, to conceal the truth ? An honest man am I, who would not——"

"Enough. Speak truth, lest I lose my patience and punish you for hiding your cows."

"Then I will speak truly. There *are* two hundred cows of mine, but they pasture far away in the country of Bornu, where doubtless my herdsmen will pay the tax when it is asked."

"We shall see ; now, the remaining fifty ?"

"For those, lion, I know not where they can be."

"I will tell you ; across the river at the hamlet of Madachi."

"Ah, now truly I remember. It is indeed so, but fifteen belong to the orphan child of my friend, who is lately dead. Of a certainty the Government will not tax the young and fatherless ? Other twenty I am herding for Mustapha, who has gone upon a far journey,

and I may not sell even a small one to pay the tax without his consent. How can I say which one he would wish to sell? The duty of a guardian is strict and clear. As for the rest they are sick and dying of foot-and-mouth disease, therefore are exempt."

Abdallahi makes this statement with assurance, rejoicing in his heart, congratulating himself mightily. After all he will only have to pay upon the original thirty, or perhaps thirty-two. He will warn his herdsmen to drive the two hundred into the thick bush of some other province, and all will be well. Further, though perforce he has apparently spoken like an honest man and favourably impressed the District Officer, mentally he rubs hands with satisfaction. But to his surprise comes the pronouncement :

"O perjured one, thus will you pay. I will telegraph upon the wire to Bornu, ordering that the two hundred shall be sought and taxed. If others are found, you will, further, eat a fine. Upon the orphan's cows you will pay the tax, and thus acquire merit, for it is written, ye shall help the widow and the fatherless. Upon the twenty of friend Mustapha, you will also pay, and settle with him after. As for the sick cows, they were not sick this morning when I saw them. Upon these also you will pay the tax, and once again the tax, as a fine for lying and concealment. You may go. It is finished."

Sorrowfully and without a word, his face displaying injured innocence and resignation, Abdallahi rises and so moves away dejectedly until he is beyond the precincts of the camp. There his features broaden to a grin, for he knows—as I too knew later—that far out into a watery and reedy swamp, some miles away, three hundred of his best and finest cattle are feeding on the weeds and

grass by day, unknown and undiscovered, and nightly driven to his camp. As for the rest, Allah, from whom all things come, has decreed that he should be worsted this time ; " Allaku 'Akbar," but at least he has saved half his tax.

Domestic servants if happy and well treated associate themselves tremendously with their master's interests and possessions. " Are we giving a big dinner to-night ? " they will say, and always allude to " our house," " our horses," " our towels are getting short," and so on. They carry this sense of allied interests too far sometimes, and, however honest they may be towards oneself, are not always above temptation to increase " our house's " prosperity at the expense of others. Along the road to Kano I met a man I knew, and it befell that we camped together at one rest-house. We pooled resources and dined together pleasantly, talking of many things, and on the morrow parted, going our several ways. At my next solitary meal two handsome forks were laid upon my table, the like and quality of which I had never possessed, and on inquiry I found that my small boy had deftly purploined them from the other man's boys in the general washing up, hoping to please me by such addition to our pantry. Forthwith I sent a runner restoring to my friend his property with apology, and sometime later a note came back, " Many thanks. Herewith two knives of yours ! "

Of all the natives whom I knew intimately, no one, of course, was so closely associated with me in small daily matters as my cook. For ten years in my service under all sorts of conditions, and in every part of the northern provinces, he gave me endless opportunity of studying and getting to know his ways and character,

and in spite of sundry lapses and minor peccadilloes I realize that no one could have served me more faithfully, or better played the game, as a black man understands it.

He was about forty-five when he came to me first, short and thick-set, with a coal black skin and small beard turning grey. Originally a pagan from Asaba on the Niger, he had had a varied life from his account of it. He had fought as a soldier in the Ashanti wars on the Gold Coast, had been a fisherman in his village, and wandered over the whole of Nigeria either trading or as servant to various Europeans from 1900 onwards. He was not clever, though he had his share of native shrewdness, but he was capital in the bush as cook and general handy man. His real name I have forgotten ; he told it me, but all I can remember is that it was unpronounceable, and for working purposes he called himself Tom Iddah. He had no religion, even his pagan superstitions had passed from his mind, but he was cheerfully prepared to call himself anything that would suit the moment. During the decennial census, when I was entering his particulars on the form, he suggested that I should describe him as a Christian, but quickly agreed with me that he had no real grounds for claiming to be one.

After some years with me in the Moslem States, it struck him that in Rome one should do as the Romans do, and one evening I came in to my compound at the sunset hour of prayer and to my astonishment gazed upon the hinder end—all that was presented to me—of my cook, who was busily prostrating himself and mumbling inaccurate invocations to Allah. Rising at length, Yakubu, as he informed me he was now called,

confessed rather shamefacedly that he had not yet got the hang of it—and as a fact I knew the *fatiha* far better than he did—but that proficiency was only a matter of time. Time after all did not help him much, for he soon became a backslider, and when I reproved him for so constantly omitting his prayers, remarked to me confidentially that there was not much in it. Yakubu, however, he insisted on being called by the rest of the household, and with the name he put on a comic dignity, particularly on feast days or ceremonial occasions.

His Excellency the Governor came to Kontagora on a visit. A durbar was to be held for the native chiefs to meet him, and as arrangements for marshalling the crowds, however carefully rehearsed, were apt to break down, sometimes it was my habit to have my Government messengers grouped handily behind me during these functions, in case of disorder or chaos. The day arrived, the Governor and his staff drove up and were escorted to their chairs, while I sat by his side to interpret. Some small hitch occurred presently, and, turning to beckon a messenger forward, I saw to my amazement a resplendent figure pressing eagerly forward.

His spotless gown and embroidered trousers outshone all others, and the noble turban almost but not quite prevented me from realizing that this was Yakubu, who had no earthly right to be among the messengers. There he stood, a goat among the sheep, with a broad complacent smile which only vanished when I signed to him to remove himself utterly from my sight.

At all times he identified himself completely with

my career. Once I returned from leave, bringing with me in its wooden case a sword which I was for the first time entitled to wear on dress occasions as a Resident.

Leaving him to examine and arrange my loads for a carrier journey up country, I left my camp awhile, but presently returning I discovered him standing in front of the sword case propped up like an idol against the wall and explaining to his smiling wife the glories of the concealed toothpick. "At last," said he, "my master is a big judge and wears a sword. For years my heart has been sore within me, listening to the swagger and jibes of other boys whose white men held higher rank than mine. Now that the long delayed power has come to us, I can answer fittingly the scoffers who annoyed me." His words were a combined congratulation of himself and me.

The native soldier trained in the military groove of strict routine has few ideas outside it, and according to the old system is all the better soldier for that. He is told that every one he challenges on sentry must reply, but what the answer is seems to matter little to him. An English trader stumbled homeward after a convivial evening with his friends, and in that pleasant condition which worries about nothing. As he approached a guard-room the native sentry challenged him: "Halt! Who go dar?" No answer from the bibulous one. Again the challenge, and again no answer. A third time the now excited soldier demanded: "Halt! Who go dar?" Whereon our genial passer-by, awakened by this time from his musings and rather irritated at the waking, replied with temper, "Oh, go to hell." "Well, why you no say so before?" remarked the worried but now

mollified guardian of the night, quite satisfied to have an answer, even though it was as incorrect as it was impolite.

It has been hard work to get into these people's minds, to break through the veil of guarded watchfulness which they have put up between themselves and us. They have had a very real reason for suspicion and timidity. To both of the old sections, the bullies and the bullied, our actions, after the first warring was over, must have caused amazement and distrust. The initial conquest ended, and the first few years employed in quelling Moslem insurrections and controlling intractable pagans, we settled down, a handful among the millions, to carry out our policy. Every one was preparing for the new régime to proceed upon the same lines of pillage and rapacity to which they were accustomed, with perhaps this difference, that now the former robbers would join the robbed, and so be mulcted of their gains. So I think they expected, but somehow the new régime did not at all pan out as they had imagined. Somehow the white *conquistadores* did not behave according to time-honoured custom, and get all they could from the country. I imagine astonishment was followed quickly by suspicion. This looked like some very deep game. Those few natives employed as agents and interpreters by the British staff hastened, I have no doubt, to tell the chiefs and people that there seemed no danger for the present of any terrible maltreatment; but I am very sure that both informers and their hearers were equally dumbfounded.

It is not difficult to picture the scenes and discussions that went on: the wondering what it all meant. In



A DESERT DWELLER

the high, dark rooms of Emir's palaces, as in the poky village huts, there were not lacking hopes and fears and doubts about the future. In fancy I can hear the prophets who foretold of this and that, the scoffers who derided our goodwill, the faint and timid hoppers that there might come improvement. Some of our acts must have seemed ridiculous to them. The abolition of the state of slavery. How were farms to be tilled and service done? The paying for all supplies and labour. Why! when as conquerors we could take what we wanted? Everything we did was eyed with timid watchfulness and surprise. As the years passed, and peace, with non-interference with religious customs and their social life, spread over the country, a reserved confidence began to show itself, but very slowly, very gradually. Seeing was believing. Improvement was there and benefits they could enjoy. Even the chiefs—the better sort—began to recognize some value in the way things were going. With the removal of much of their power to ill-use the peasantry, except as they could do it in secret, came the vision that they had not the same need to rob. Fixed salaries and fewer obligations had done away with that.

So, little by little, a certain confidence has begun to show itself. Shortness of staff and, above all, lack of continuity are our handicaps. In cases where one officer has spent several tours in one district, has become known to even 30 per cent. of his people, truly astonishing things have been done in proof of their reliance and trust in him. Among the servant class, an example, such as that old cook of mine, associated with me for ten years, shows how much such close contact can do. He

spoke quite freely and fearlessly at the end. He had his little peccadilloes, the quaint and rather Machiavellian ways to gain his little ends, but he knew me and I knew him, and in essentials he made good. He taught me much of what all natives really think and feel. For all that much has been said and written about the "back of the black man's mind," the difficulty of getting at it, and the dark, mysterious, incomprehensible corners of it, I am convinced that, in the end, it is a childish mind.

There is just one word which expresses well, and covers the native's whole outlook upon life, that is, ephemeral. He does not care to look beyond the present, and all his acts are done to meet immediate needs. His intrigues are usually petty, ill-conceived, and successful only because we are not yet used to his line of reasoning. He is timid of harm, and employs a cunning which is the child of that timidity. He lies to get out of trouble, just as a nervous English child will fib his way out of a licking. His lies are not good lies, or well maintained, but his facial stolidity often helps him to conceal the truth. He is no fool where his own interests are concerned, and his sometimes exasperating methods of concealment generally have reason of a sort behind him. Often I have come upon some act of injustice in a village, and asked the sufferer why he had not complained to me rather than let me find it out. He will murmur "Zaki zaki" in self-excuse, but his point of view is clear enough. He would get redress, and cause the man who wronged him to be punished, but when I passed on, as presently I should, he would be defenceless once more up against his powerful aggressor. We have been

with him but twenty years, we are a mere few, and not ubiquitous, but his chiefs have lorded it for centuries over him, are always at his doorstep, and are yet powerful for harm. No wonder that he prefers to suffer silently.

It is on the present, then, that the native mind is working, the need, desire, or trouble of the day and not the future which concerns him, and all his energies, both physical and mental, are directed to that end. He farms or plies his trade to keep his family and himself from day to day; he plans his little schemes to gain an end or avoid a difficulty which lies close at hand, and reckons not of the future. He has the limitations of untutored thoughts, he is intensely superstitious, believing greatly in the value of charms, and beset by fears of witchcraft and the evil eye. He shies like some blinkered horse at what he does not understand, loses his head at a strange emergency, but only when he is frightened, angered, or worked upon by evil counsel does his mind get turned to speech and action foreign to its natural bent.

As with the masses, so with the classes there are difficulties. The air of courts and palaces is as bad for native mentality and morality as for any other. Competition for princes' favours, the possibilities of gain without honest work, the scope which petty authority will give, all have their devastating influence on minds not strong enough to stand the strain, and it is there we find the lowest level of morale.

But go among the simpler folk, leading their simple, unchanging lives, year after year, and you will see how few complexities there are. Talk to the farmer, hunter, carrier or craftsman, see him at his work, and listen to

his views. Get used to him, and still more get him used to you, and you will find frankness and unsuspicion in all he says, and in the end you will come to feel, as I have done, that they are nothing more than a simple, kindly and childlike race.



YOUNG NIGERIA



FULANI CATTLE

CHAPTER IX

HUNTING EPISODES

I HAD some good chances of shooting while I was in Nigeria. Big game was fairly plentiful in the less-populated parts of the bush when I first went out, but one always had to work hard for one's sport, for the areas were large, and animals were not so numerous as they are in East Africa. For a long time I kept a record of what I shot and the rough distances I covered in my hunting, and I fancy it worked out that every head I killed cost me a 30-mile walk. This is not so surprising as it sounds at first, for there were frequent blank days, and at the beginning many fruitless stalks due to my inexperience. My earliest efforts to get within reasonable range were full of mistakes and lack of care in approaching up wind, in going noiselessly and in using every bit of cover. A lot of patience, too, was necessary, and often enough I missed a chance through being too hurried.

I was neither a good nor a bad shot, just average, I think, but my shooting depended enormously, as I suppose it does with every one, on nerve steadiness and my general fitness. For example, I went out one morning and fired five shots in two hours' walking, returned to camp with a wart-hog, a hartebeest, an oribi, a reed buck and a bush cat, and except the last, which was a

snap-shot, the range was a little over 100 yards. Another time I was hunting in the marsh flats of the Benue River and spied a kob buck feeding in the open. There was enough grass cover to take me without exertion to within 60 yards of him, and I settled comfortably down behind a clump of reeds to get on to him. I shot as I generally did, sitting down with both elbows on knees; I was quite unblown by the stalk and, as I thought, steady enough. My first shot brought his head up, but he did not move nor shift his feet. There was nothing to account for the miss, I knew my rifle and was quite unflurried, anyhow, when firing the first shot. I fired four more at him and he stood the whole bombardment until the last, when he probably felt the wind of the bullet, and moved away at a walk, not even a gallop. I always like to remember that though I had more ammunition left, I got up and shouted to him to clear off, which he did forthwith. He had stood his risk fairly, and it was clear he was not meant to die that day, in fact, as my hunter remarked with the calm philosophy which is theirs, "Kwanansa bai kare ba"—"his day is not yet ended."

I was no slaughterer at any time. I tried for the best heads, and when I had got decent ones of any species left the antelope alone, unless I came across a pair of horns that seemed to beat any that I had. I never would shoot a giraffe, which, to me, is a most inoffensive creature and possesses nothing which will make a trophy. I came on a herd of five once in Bornu, the bull of which I could have killed easily enough, but I only rode towards them and eventually galloped them for close on a mile, keeping about 30 yards behind.

There was an old roan antelope, too, whom I came across when on the march. He seemed ill, and moved so sluggishly in his gallop that I was actually able to ride alongside of him and flick his quarters with my whip; but I let him go, for I had no wish to kill him.

There is a lot of luck in game shooting—luck in finding, and luck in getting a good position for a shot. I never saw a lion till my last year in Nigeria, though I have been after them many a time, yet I have known youngsters in their first year who have run across them by pure chance. Leopard, too, have given me exasperating experiences. At Gujba, in Bornu, I had one located in a patch of thick bush one early morning. He was a dangerous fellow who had attacked a villager the day before. My beaters drove him down to the last tongue of cover, out of which he must break to north or south when he reached the tip of it. I chose the north, posting my chief hunter on the other side, for the odds were on the leopard coming out my way. From behind my bush I heard him moving in the undergrowth and stood ready for him, but to my disappointment he broke the other way, my hunter getting him with an arrow shot, from the poison of which he shortly died. I have tried for leopard time after time, but fate always intervened in most unlooked-for ways.

I never used a heavy rifle. I began my shooting with a little .303 carbine and killed quite a lot of stuff with it, including a very big bull hippo. That was a lucky snap-shot, as I found his brain through the eye as he rose to breathe in a deep pool of the Gongola.

Later I bought a Manlicher-Schoenaur .375, a beautiful weapon which I used for many years, and if I except

elephant, rhino and bush cow, it was a rifle big enough for all else. Most hunters agree, I suppose, that except for a dead shot a heavier rifle is advisable for the largest game, for it stops a charging animal where a Manlicher might not. It was a most reliable firearm, and so I found it, its only drawback being the delicacy of the patent revolving magazine, which is a beautiful piece of mechanism, but requires to be kept perfectly clean and free of dust and grit, not always an easy matter at the end of a day's hunt. It once played me a trick near a herd of hartebeest feeding towards me on a still, quiet evening near sunset. I loaded from the magazine, but something hitched the revolution and the groove did not come up true to the breech line. The result was that the cartridge stuck halfway to the breech, and I spent five minutes trying to clear it while the antelope fed round me like placid cows working through a meadow.

I never found the natives, with one or two exceptions, really good hunters. They are keen-sighted, able to pick out animals in similar coloured scrub, and are patient in following a track or waiting in a tree for game, but they are slow trackers, and are apt when hunting with a white man to make too much movement in indicating an animal's position. I had one boy who was excellent. If he spotted an unconscious herd he would sink quietly down, never turning his head or making a quick motion. If he was seen first he stood stock still, clicking his fingers behind him.

Quietness of movement is an essential to success in all shooting, and by lying like a log, when seen by something, for quite ten minutes, I have sometimes got a shot in when suspicion had quieted down. Wild animals are pretty well armed against the hunter. Their scent

is marvellous, and it is surprising how a puffy changing wind will spoil a good stalk. Their sight, except with elephant and rhino, is extraordinarily keen, and above all they have an instinct against danger which protects them more often than one would believe. I once had a good stalk spoilt by this instinct, although it was not against me that it worked directly. I was after a herd of kob feeding out on some river flats. The cover grass was good enough though not abundant, the wind was right, and everything seemed to point to a successful stalk, and I had about 100 yards to go. I left my hunter in the belt of trees, one of which he climbed to get a view, and set off, doing the first half stooping, and the last mostly on my stomach. I reached my point rather hot and blown, and found the herd still feeding peacefully, but as I manœuvred round a grass clump to get the best position, I saw an old buck put up his head and stare, not at me, but at a point some 50 yards to my left. This I thought was curious, and watched him move round in a restless circle and stop to stare again at the same spot. He was evidently uneasy, and the rest of the herd became infected with the same distrust, every head went up, and most of them began to move about backwards and forwards in front of me and about 50 yards off.

I was so interested that I made no attempt to put in a shot, but continued watching their antics, until half a minute later the old sentry snorted loudly, wheeled round, and went off at a gallop followed by the rest, none of them pausing till they were out of sight. I myself sat up and scratched my head, trying to think if I had really been heard or seen, and then walked back to the trees. What had happened my hunter told me, for he had seen it all from his tree. During my laborious

crawl through the grass, a leopard had trotted out of the thick cover and begun a stalk himself. His line converging on mine brought him about 40 yards from me, and had we had farther to go would have landed him close beside me, each unconscious of the other. But something had warned the kob. It is unlikely that the leopard had shown himself, for I am sure he was a better stalker than I was. He could no more have been winded by the game than myself, and I can only think that some protective extra sense gave warning to the antelope of his attack, and let them get away in time. Anyway the leopard was as disappointed, if not more so, than I was, for the man saw him trot back into the thick cover in evident dudgeon.

The vitality of wild animals was another thing that amazed me. The larger antelopes will often carry off five or six ill-placed bullets of the smaller calibres. A male wart-hog which I shot through the heart ran 75 yards (paced), and then fell stone dead. Another kob ran a half-circle of 50 yards and collapsed in just the same way with the heart ploughed by the bullet. A small light animal like a Senegambian gazelle I have known to take a high velocity hard-nosed bullet which passed clean through him without touching a major bone or vital part apparently, and gallop off out of sight almost without concern. All good sportsmen recognize that the one essential thing in shooting is to follow up wounded game and never leave them unfound if it is anyway possible. I have stuck to this principle at the cost of enormous expenditure of strength and effort rather than let a wounded animal get away to linger on in agony, and once I followed a wounded roan for five hours and found him at the end. I think another

reasonable thing to remember is that unless one is a dead shot one should shoot at no animal beyond a range of 150 yards, except, of course, when there is some special reason, such as an escaping wounded one impossible to find again. Careless or promiscuous shooting is both cruel and unsporting.

The native hunters in Nigeria, in common with other professions, are great believers in charms and amulets to bring them luck or assistance in their work. One old Sarkin Bakka, chief of the bow, who was at one time my constant companion and who had helped me to many a kill, was a firm believer in their power, and insisted on giving me a set of amulets of his own. With a grave face, for no one but a fool would ridicule or show incredulity in anything pertaining to such serious work as hunting, I thanked him and accepted with becoming satisfaction. The amulets were four in number. One was a brass ring with a written charm sewn into a leather case attached to it. This ensured unswerving aim, and was worn on the trigger finger. Another bound to the forehead gave invisibility, a third at the back of the head prevented one being winded by the game, while the last, hung round the neck, kept the wearer from harm by attack. The faith of my old friend in the efficacy of his gift was charming, and at his urgent request I put on the whole paraphernalia when a few days later I went out with him for an hour or two at dawn. His childish satisfaction at the sight of me was too intense to spoil by any show of the diffidence I may have felt.

The following shows how completely this faith was vindicated to his mind at least. Our walk had proved fruitless except for sight of some duiker antelope and a

pig, none of which I wanted to shoot, and at eight o'clock we were turning homeward to breakfast and my office work. We were just about to cross a *fako*, which is an area of hard-baked mud bare of grass or tree, when I spotted a big solitary bull roan antelope walking across it quite unconscious of us. Quietly we sank down and watched him reach the middle, where he stopped and nosed the remains of some wet mud spot. I judged him to be 200 yards off, and all the cover I could use would take me a bare 20 yards nearer to him, but I utilized it and wriggled cautiously forward. My shot took him too far back behind the shoulder, and kicking up his heels he cantered off, travelling for a couple of hundred yards and pulling up at the far edge of the clearing. Here was a to do! The distance was now over far for another shot from where I sat. To go round was useless, for the *fako* stretched a mile or two on either hand. The only approach was straight across, and the ground was as bare as an empty dish. Nothing for it but to gain as much advance as I could and risk a long shot. Just as I had settled this and started to go forward, I felt a touch on my arm. "You can walk right up to him," said the old man, "he will not see you," touching the charm upon my forehead. Perhaps there was a look of doubt or disbelief in my eyes, for he shook his head vehemently and repeated: "Go on, he will not move." I looked at the hard dry mud stretch in front of me. There seemed little use in going at a stoop, or trying to disguise my movement in any way, so I set off, walking quietly towards the roan, and halting every now and then. To my astonishment he never stirred. Two or three times he looked round in my direction, only to turn his head away as if he had

seen nothing, and gazed in other directions too in the same undisturbed way. I covered 100, 200 and now 300 yards of the distance. Still he never moved. I actually made another 20 yards towards him and at that my faith completely failed me, and I shot him dead at 60 yards.

How much nearer I could have got I shall never know. Had he been unwounded I think I would have tested it, and chanced his clearing off. The old hunter would swear to the end of his days that I could have got right up to him had I tried. Of course I have my own view of it, for he must have been a very sick animal, whose wound had stiffened or paralysed some of the muscles, so that he could not move, but the happening just goes to show how superstitions and beliefs in charms get strengthened and confirmed in the native mind by some such coincidence as that. Years after I met a man of those parts who knew of that morning's work, and reminded me of the power of the charm which carried me invisible across that open sunlit ground.

On a voyage in a steel barge down the Gongola River, we had started off one morning just as dawn was coming when my headman of the polers poked his head into the compartment well and whispered "Dorina." Just as I was—in pyjamas—I clambered with my rifle on to the roof of the barge and lying down peered forward in the direction he was pointing. The dim grey light was barely filtering through the river mists, and all I could make out was a big dark blur moving slowly down the sands to the water—evidently master hippo returning from his night gorge and destruction in the farms along the bank. Just as he let himself down into the water I let fly and hit him somewhere

in his enormous bulk, for the thud of the bullet came back to my ears as he took the deep water with a plunge. As he made off down stream, I signed the polers to get after him, and away we went, all hands scanning the glassy surface for his reappearance. The light grew stronger and presently he came up to breathe, and I fired just below his ear tip, apparently without effect. Again he sank, but probably being shaken, emerged soon after, making through the shallows for a patch of thick reeds, where he turned, facing us and opening his cavern of a mouth in anger. Another shot into his great jaws made him turn and crash away into the reeds, while the polers, now wildly excited, swung the barge round the point of sand to intercept him on the other side. Sure enough we found him there standing in the shallow water which swirled and rippled round his knee joints, but we came round the bend at such a rate, and were edged in so quickly by the current, that before we could push out we ran right on to the shoal and stuck within 15 yards of where he stood.

He was mad with rage by now and made for us with gaping mouth which looked large enough to take the whole barge, as he came lumbering along towards us; and I remember wondering, as I fired hurriedly into his mouth, whether such a mass of flesh could be stopped at all by the Manlicher bullet. That shot anyway did not, and he got within 10 feet of the side of the barge when another bullet took him in the neck. He fell over in the shallow water, thrashed round and round like a whirligig, and finally half rolled, half kicked himself off into the deeper water and disappeared again. But he was done for now, and died below the surface, floating next day, when he was found and towed to shore.

He was a fine specimen and must have weighed all of 2 tons as he lay on the sand waiting to be cut up. Two entire villages took part in his disposal, and except the tusks and a square of hide, which I kept for myself, not one scrap of him remained by evening. The meat was shared out, the bones and hide disappeared in all directions, and even the intestines, a mighty mass, were cut into lengths and distributed round. There was not left enough to feed a puppy, and the disappointed vultures hopped and searched in vain about the sand. Sometimes I have speculated what he would have done had he not been stopped; quite possibly have got a poler if one had been fool enough to stay, or bent the side of the barge considerably. It was the nearest I have been to a living hippo, and the nearest I ever want to be.

Away up in Sokoto province, at Birnin Kebbi, the extreme north-west, I heard many stories of the hyenas' ravages all over the district. A certain number were killed each year by hunters or taken in pit-traps, but they bred so quickly in the flat-topped laterite hills that the destruction made no difference in their numbers. The loathsome brutes, chiefly of the striped variety, sometimes ran to enormous size, and, as well as making their skulking raids at night upon goats, donkeys and even mares in the towns, had often become bold enough to attack human beings, and by daylight. A native and his wife, returning to their village at sunset after market, followed a marsh track 2 miles from my station. The man, walking some 50 yards behind the woman, saw her attacked and pulled down by a big hyena, but being unarmed he cast about for a stick, and eventually drove it off. The woman was, however, so badly bitten that

she died. Another villager, arriving at a village late at night, lay down to sleep most foolishly under a tree outside; in the morning he was found dead with most of his face bitten away. A mail runner was attacked by several of the brutes together, and all that was found of him was a leg bone. I have had some experiences myself with these animals. I was sleeping one night on the veranda of my mud house, on a small camp bed which was so short for my length that my feet, pressing against the mosquito net, projected an inch or two beyond the end.

I woke with a start, feeling something thrusting violently against them, and saw an old hyena looking at me through the net in the moonlight. I shouted at him loudly, and he scrambled off, not man enough to continue the attack, though so strong are their jaws and neck development that had he taken hold he could have dragged me out with ease, bed and all. The bodies of hyenas are among those into which the native wizards are supposed to change themselves when they want to prey upon mankind, and I had a queer experience of this universal belief among the pagans in my second tour. A friend and I had set a spring-gun trap and a dead village dog as bait, to get a particularly troublesome one who had been stealing our goats at night. In the middle of dinner we heard the gun go off and, seizing our revolvers and a lamp apiece, dashed out to have a look. The bait still lay there, with teeth marks in his head, but close to him was a pool of blood and a piece of jaw lying near. From the tall guinea-corn farm in front we heard a moaning sound which told us a hyena was wounded somewhere in there, and following the noise we dived into the stalks to get him.

This was our mistake, for, as I learned afterwards and I believe it quite true, hyenas are in a sense ventriloquial and can make their howl come from another point than where they actually are. We searched a long time, hearing the mournful howl coming from this quarter and that until it died away, and we lost him altogether. The sequel to this was rather weird. Next day I heard a certain villager, well known to be a wizard, had been seen returning in the dawn, his jaw bound up in a bloodstained rag, and looking very sick. He died before that sun went down, and all the village rejoiced because that dreaded hyena man would trouble them no more, saying how fortunate it was that he had been attracted by the dog bait before he went on to catch a human being.

With such a detestation of these animals as I had, it was not long before I tried at Birnin Kebbi to find some way of killing more of them than by night shooting over baits, and eventually a young Fulani herdsman came to me and said he could show me how to come at them by day. Hyenas live in holes in the ground, or rock caves in the hills, and he told me that those in the hills round were in the habit of leaving their holes during the afternoons of the dry weather when the earth became uncomfortably heated, and sought the thick undergrowth which filled the gullies running down to the plain. There they would lie till evening before starting out upon their night prowls. A dozen beaters to roll rocks down the gullies from the top would drive them out of cover, when I could kill them all, as he remarked, with the flattering assumption that I never missed. So it was arranged, and so it befell just as my young adviser had foretold. I did not get the lot, but

I managed to destroy quite a number in this way. It was practically all snap-shooting. The beaters headed the top of the gully, I posted myself half-way down on one side, and the fun began. Down would come the great boulders, bounding and crashing through the thick bushes, and soon one heard the cracking of twigs and the noise of pushing through dry grass as the animals got on the move. There were other things in there too, bush buck, civet cat, wild cats and duiker—but mostly I left these alone.

The shooting was good practice at running game, and the distance varied from 100 yards to 10. One big brute I got at close range. Standing on a ledge of red laterite on the hillside I was watching across the gully for the first sight of the game, when a movement just below me caught the tail of my eye. I looked down and saw a whacking big fellow just below me. He had come sneaking along to get over the gully edge just where I stood, and was as much surprised to see me as I was to find him there. From 6 feet below he stared up at me with baleful eye and teeth bared, wondering which way to go, while I settled the matter for him by a shot which bowled him over and sent him rolling over and over down the gully side. I shot at different times a number of these noxious beasts, and the killing of every one brought me a real sense of satisfaction at ridding the countryside of such pests.

Night watching for animals has a fascination all its own. It requires much patience, perfect immobility and constant readiness to take one's opportunity, and though it often ends in disappointment of a particular object tried for, it rewards one in other ways by the sight of animals going unconsciously about their business.

I was after a leopard. The hot weather was on and all the water-holes but two were dried up in the surrounding bush. I chose the more likely of the two, with a thick convenient tree close by, in which I had a platform lashed and a small shooting hole cleared through the foliage, and on a good moonlit night I took up my position about nine o'clock. To help my aim I painted the foresight of my rifle with white paint and sprinkled it while wet with crystallized sugar which sparkled in the moonlight and answered admirably.

The night was very still. Not a breath of wind to stir the leaves upon my tree or rustle the bush grass round the glade where lay the water-hole. The moon stared down upon the country spread out in silver light and shadow beneath its rays, and no note of bird or beast broke as yet the silence which rested heavy over all. Well as I knew the spot by daylight, its whole aspect seemed to have changed with night. The shadows thrown by the moon kept shifting, shortening and changing all the while. Dark shaded spots cleared gradually to brightness, and tufts and details showed up as though fresh planted. As night wore on old shadows moved around while new ones formed to hide some well-accustomed feature, and the whole scene kept altering from hour to hour. To stare long at one fixed spot caused one's eyes to see it occupied by some imagined form which seemed to crouch and move a trifle, but never to take concrete shape, and vanish when one rested and returned the gaze.

My watch showed eleven o'clock and still no sign of any living thing, but soon after I had shifted my position a little, and settled down to further vigil, the night life woke and things began to happen. A small

bat fluttered in my face and scurried off in great alarm. Others of his tribe came dancing round my tree squeaking and calling to each other, and a great white owl came sailing past me to settle near at hand and call his mate. Then along a grassy ridge something went galloping, a dim grey blur which I could not recognize, and passed away from sight. I looked down to rest my eyes and saw just at the foot of my tree two strange little objects about the size of guinea-pigs, busily nosing about among the fallen leaves and grass, and making little short runs back and forth in the shadow. They stayed quite a while and eventually ambled off contentedly and quite unconscious of their watcher.

A rustle in the grass next sent my eye across the pool to see an ant bear wander out, moving ungainly to the water's edge. He snuffed about for a minute or two then lumbered on and disappeared into the bush. He was followed soon by two jackals, which came with fear and distrust in every line of them. Advancing yard by yard they stopped at every one, turning their heads each side and jumping round to stare about them as though they were being followed all the while. They seemed all wires, and twice they started off as if in flight then returned again, drawing nearer each time to the water. At last one dashed forward, lapping furiously while his companion watched, and, jumping back, let the other drink in his turn. Again they both sprang back, staring hard at my tree, but, reassured, both took another drink, and then moved off with starts and jumps and little circling runs just as they had come. For a little while nothing further happened save that some animal of the skunk tribe fled past, invisible to me, but leaving on the air a tainted notice of his escape in fright. It

was nearing one o'clock and I knew that another hour or so would see the end of any useful watching, for as a rule night prowlers will not drink much after two o'clock. I feared my friend the leopard would not come here this night, for, drinking as they do chiefly after a kill, I thought he must have killed by now, and if anywhere in the neighbourhood gone to the other water-hole a mile away. So it proved, and I was disappointed of my chance at him, although I had no less than three more visitors before I gave it up.

The first was another, very much larger, jackal of a different species, with long dark brown fur, white dusted, and a thick bushy tail. He was alert but not so timorous as the smaller fry, drank more leisurely and trotted off at last more confidently. I should like to have shot him for the pelt, but I did not wish to spoil the chance of the leopard coming at the last. The next comer slunk out of cover, looking right and left and came with a crawling run to the water, where it crouched and lapped carefully and slowly. Its black face and slate grey body barred with black told me that it was a civet cat, an animal much prized by the natives for the *turare*, the highly-scented secretion which they get from it. It slunk off in its turn, and there was a short pause during which I, feeling by this time a little stiff and chilly, was thinking it was nearly time to move, when the ugly body, which I knew so well, with the drooping, cringing quarters and the powerful fore-quarters, glided out of the bush and made for the water with its furtive run. Disgusted and annoyed to see my pet aversion come to put away all chance of the leopard arriving now, I slowly covered him with the whitened foresight, which showed up

bravely against his hide. Perhaps he noticed the movement, for he stared hard into the tree, right into my peephole, as if he knew I was behind it; but I kept motionless, and presently he dropped his head to drink, half glancing upwards as he did so. My bullet took him in the spine between the shoulders, and he dropped where he drank without a kick or struggle. That ended the night of watching. I went homeward then not altogether dissatisfied with my vigil, for—though I had not bagged the leopard—I had at least enjoyed the experience of seeing at close quarters some of the night animals going about their affairs quite unsuspecting of my presence.

Earlier in this chapter I spoke of the element of luck in hunting, and of how I never saw a lion till my last year in the country. When at last I did see him, I failed to kill, but the episode was certainly one of the most interesting of all my encounters with big game.

For some months in 1923 the main road from Jos to Bauchi had been patrolled and troubled by three lions, a male and female with a half-grown cub. They were constantly being seen by travellers and traders with their caravans of donkeys on the road itself, and by the herdsmen of the cattle in the bush. The actual spots where they lay hidden in the daytime were never found, but once or twice they had been seen sunning themselves upon one of a pair of smooth rock hills called "Dutsin Tagwaye," the "Twin Hills," from which they could see all the surrounding country and the cattle pasturing. They had done a good deal of damage among the latter, and also among the donkeys and goats in the villages about, and eventually I got a chance to visit the place and have a try for them. The rains

were ending, and the last wild storms were sweeping the sky clear each night, when I set out for the neighbourhood of the Twin Hills, and camped at a little hamlet about a mile from them. I had tried several times to come across the lions from a more distant village, but the bush grass was now 8 feet or more in height, and hunting was almost impossible at that time of year, so I had decided that only good luck in seeing them up on the hill would help me to a kill, and to effect that I meant to be close by and visit it each day. Night came and with it one of the last storms. My little hut, one of the best in the hamlet, might have had no roof at all the way it leaked. It was a sieve, and the place itself, 8 feet in diameter, could hold little more than my bed and chair. For an hour or two I sat in a mackintosh and saw it through, and when the rain stopped lay down to a damp, uneasy sleep. I was awakened by an appalling din which seemed to come from close outside the hamlet, such a noise as I had never heard before. It was two of the lions roaring in chorus, the most fiendish, heart-shaking sound that one can listen to. My watch told me it was after three o'clock, the night was clear and starry, so I lay and listened to that fearsome roar until the lions began to draw off, still roaring, towards the hills, and at last passed into the distance, and all sound died away.

At the first glimmer of dawn I was up and making my way with two hunters to the main cleared road, down which I walked towards the Twin Hills. If the lions were making for there they would have to cross this road somewhere, and I felt sure I could pick up their tracks on the soft, rain-sodden ground. Sure enough, about 100 yards short of the hill I saw where all three

had crossed and gone on into the thick grass, which stood all round one of the "Twins" and ran right up to its foot interspersed with trees and undergrowth. The hill itself rose out of the tangle, bare of all vegetation, a solid mass of grey basalt 200 feet in height. On two sides it was unclimbable, the third fell steeply to the north, while the fourth came down at an easier slope on to the plain. Half-way up this and on to the very top, lay some huge boulders dotted about here and there, but otherwise the rock was as bare as the palm of my hand except upon the northern side which was thickly clothed with bush.

Followed by the two hunters, I entered the tall grass, which wet me through inside three minutes, and cautiously pushed along the line of bent and crushed stalks through which the lions had forced their way. Now and then a pug mark showed itself, but presently among the stones and scrub at the foot of the hill all signs of them disappeared. We cast around a bit in the scrub for further tracks, because my hunters whispered to me that it was not likely that the lions would be on the hill till later, when the sun should warm the rock and they could bask there. Eager not to lose them now, I left one man to continue the search below, and walked a little way up the rock slope to see if I could get a view over the bush and spot them down below. Nothing to be seen. Finally, I went on up to the loose boulders to wait there in the hope that they might come up later. It was a stiffish pull, and slightly blown I reached the first boulder, stepped round it a trifle carelessly, and came full on the lion lying with head on paws and looking at me! He was about 20 yards from me, and I confess I was astounded in those first few seconds.

The meeting was so unexpected, he looked so much larger than I imagined he would be, and the last one of his kind I had seen had been the other side of the cage-bars at the Zoo.

It was not nervousness, but the most profound astonishment which kept me rooted there an instant too long, for as I brought my rifle round from across my left arm the lion sprang behind another rock like a streak of yellow flame, and was gone. I cursed myself for being unprepared, and lowered my rifle, when just beyond where the lion had been lying the head of the lioness came slowly into view. As I learnt afterwards, there was a dip or fold in the slope just there in which she had been lying hidden from me, and disturbed by her mate's rapid departure she was coming up out of the dip to have a look with nasty inquisitiveness. All I could see was her head and chest as she walked towards me, and this time, determined not to be too slow, I ended by being too quick. I fired straight at her head, and though the bullet must have missed her by the merest fraction from the way she sprang round, miss it did, and she was off, with the cub after her. I ran as fast as I could on and up to get a sight of the hillside and her downward path, and actually passed within 10 yards of the lion, which was hiding to see the lioness off the hill before he followed her, which he did by darting out and crossing my tracks behind me, to disappear down the hillside after I had gone on to the top. My hunter saw his manœuvre from behind a rock, where he had dropped when the fun began. Well, that was the end of it; I never saw them again, for they left the district after that and my chance was gone. It was a good example of how opportunity was missed.

A more experienced lion hunter would have lots to say about it ; he would say I should have been more prepared, had my rifle at the ready, and shot more quickly in the first place, more steadily in the second. It is all very true, and no one more often than myself has said, " If only I had done this or that." But all of us make mistakes, and those who never make them never succeed, although in this case it is not likely that I shall have the chance again.

The experiences I have set down are just typical of the sort of shooting we get in Nigeria. They don't record exciting adventures or hairbreadth escapes, although there were elements of risk sometimes. But, after all, this is not the record of a big game hunter, only the side life of a political officer. Shooting is not among his first duties, and he has to take such chances as they come. He cannot spend days on end tracking game, or pass his time chiefly in the districts where animals are plentiful. Sometimes he is lucky on the march, or gets an opportunity at evening in his bush camp, but for the most part he does his hunting at odd times, as and when he rightly can without detriment to his work.

The early days were the best for hunting, as for most other things. Europeans were fewer, the range of field work was wider, and much of the bush we toured was wilder and less known. Game was more plentiful then. Nowadays, in the settled times, farming operations are much extended and tracks of bush which used to hold nothing but wild animals are dotted over with hamlets and farm settlements. Cattle are ranging wider in their pasturing, and village herds wander now in bush which was known only to the nomad Fulani before. The game is drifting eastwards before this spreading of human

occupations and the coming of domestic cattle which always drive wild game away, and before long they will be gone. In the first few years of this century, elephants used to feed in the Birnin Kebbi marsh close to the station, lions used the polo grounds of Lokoja and Zungeru, and hippo swarmed in all the smaller rivers. Still there are animals to be hunted yet in the known game areas, and if a man is keen, will work hard for it, and shoot discriminately, he will find his sport, and look back on it, as I do, with pleasant memory.

CHAPTER X

A ROUND TRIP

IN 1922 I went to Kontagora province for six months to relieve the Resident, Hamilton Browne, who was due for leave. Headquarters was a queer little station, set down in the heart of the bush about a mile from Kontagora native town, and for miles around the country spread and undulated, thickly tree covered, and so sparsely inhabited that an average population of six to the square mile was all that it could produce. Kontagora's history was one long record of ravaging and miserable destruction. The ruthless Umaru Nagwamache, who first conquered it, was a Fulani of the Sokoto ruling class. High-handed and turbulent in his behaviour, he caused so much trouble among the factions there that he had to fly the country and so moved south, collecting round him a large following of the discontented and adventurous. This soldier of fortune, as he might well be called, eventually founded the town of Kontagora, the name being derived, so legend has it, from his words when he fixed upon the site, " Kwanta gora "—" Put down the drinking vessel."

So with a base camp built he raided out in all directions, sometimes for hundreds of miles, destroying,



IBRAHIM EMIR OF KONTAGORA

killing, looting and enslaving, terrorizing the land and leaving in the wake of his armies' march nothing but ruin and desolation. He fought and ravaged till he died, and passed like an evil shadow from the world. A quieter time came a for little while, during the reign of his eldest son, who was a gentler spirit ; but he died early and was followed by the second son, Ibrahim, who rules to-day, a fire-eater like his father, and his equal in rapacity and cruel ways. Ibrahim made no meek surrender to the British, but proved as slippery as an eel to catch and bring to reason. Caught he was, however, at long last, and exiled to Yola far up the Benue River, where he had leisure for a couple of years to reflect upon his past—though not, I know, to repent of it. It is perfectly true that once, when summoned to lay down his arms and submit to us, he answered, " You may kill but never capture me, and I at least will die with a slave in my mouth." His vaunt did not prove true, but after his term of exile he promised to amend his ways and was reinstalled as Emir, and reigns to-day over the sorry relics of his father's and his own destruction. I knew him well. He was a strong man though a cruel one, and, curbed and held as he is to-day, he must chafe tremendously against the restriction of the old bad activities, but he did his best to endure the uneasy position of a harnessed ruler.

The little State of Kaiama, under its own chief, lay far to the south of Kontagora, in the Borgu country, but within the boundary of the province. It was right off the beaten track, forming a subdivision of a district under an Assistant District Officer who was cut off by a ten days' direct march from Kontagora. It had not been visited by a Resident for some years, and it was

high time that an inspection should be made of it and the country round. My wife had joined me at Kontagora soon after I got there, and I made arrangements for a circular trek which would bring us round to Kaiama and thereafter back by a previously untravelled route through almost virgin bush. Part of the journey at least would not be easy or comfortable for a woman, but my wife, a plucky, practical person, made light of difficulties, and in the end proved herself as good a trekker as her husband.

Towards the end of February we set out together on the first stage of the journey, which was to Yelwa on the Upper Niger. A Ford lorry, recently acquired for Kontagora, was to be our first conveyance, and a queer contraption it looked as it stood outside our compound loaded for the start. Rolls of camp bedding formed our seat, the back part of the lorry piled with camp kit, a miscellaneous collection of tin baths, canteen, provisions, folding tables and the kitchen pans. In front the native Lagos driver and our cook sat smothered with tins of petrol and spare parts, and on the running board outside a small boy squatted, clutching the door with both hands, a marvellous imp who could and did fall happily asleep in that position. Rope lashings over all held everything in position, including chairs tied on behind ; and strung along the sides or hung from every possible corner were kettles, bottles, lamps and small articles which bumped and rattled to the swaying of the car along uneven roads. How the lorry springs stood it, and how the engine did its work was marvellous, but the Ford is undefeatable and struggles through troubles that no other car can face.

At three o'clock we started, a cheerful circus, meaning

to camp half-way and get to Yelwa next morning. All went well as we clashed and snorted our way along our so-called motor road, stopping every 10 miles or so to fill up with water and splash the tyres to keep them cool. In patches of heavy sandy going the males had to tumble off and help a passage by pushing from behind, and our average speed was about 12 miles an hour. It was a perfect evening of dry weather, and the sun went down upon our going, leaving a cool breath in the wind made by the lorry's motion, and tinting the wide countryside with its afterglow. We put up a Kob antelope by the roadside which galloped ahead of us for half a mile, amazed by the puffing monstrosity which followed on its tracks, and then turned off into the bush and his own affairs which we had so noisily disturbed.

Darkness came and found us still ploughing on, but with only a mile or two to go. The dark shadow of Libelli hill loomed up to us, with village hut fires flickering round its foot, and with a final groan the lorry pulled into the rest-camp compound and clattered to a standstill. Everybody got to work, the kit was unloaded, beds put up under the stars, and bath and dinner got ready, and it was not long before we had washed the dust of the road away and finished a good meal which tasted well out in the open, and so to our sound sleep.

Next morning early we lumbered off again, crossing the Molendo River by a stone causeway, and from the heights above it we opened the Niger valley and saw the line of the great river winding away eastwards on its far journey to the sea, and soon after we drove through Yelwa town to the government station where Diggle, the District Officer, welcomed us and produced a

breakfast that was worth a fortune to my appetite at least.

We spent forty-eight hours here while I interviewed the Emir of Yauri and inspected the site of a new house which was to be built for the political officer upon the rising ground away from the river. Yelwa was a pleasant little station whose chief drawback was the quantity of mosquitoes from the marshes which sang and bit with equal energy as soon as the sun went down. The majority were not malaria carriers, but there were quite enough to supply the necessary fever, and all of them were able to sting heartily, as my wife's arms and face soon showed. Mosquito bites have never marked me, and in the later years my dried-up body could have little attraction for the pests ; as a friend of mine used to say, "They like the newcomers, but with us old ones they bite and then die."

Yelwa was one of the river towns where Mungo Park touched on his voyage of exploration down the Niger, and to this day one of the possessions of the reigning chief of Yauri is a large coin or medal given by him to the then chief. It is set on a silver ring and worn upon the forefinger. Poor Park was drowned soon after in the Boussa rapids, taking, as we know now, the wrong channel of the river, which hurried him with ever-quickenning speed into the seething rocky water where his craft capsized, and he perished quickly. The town itself lay in a long straggling line along the river bank facing the large island of Rofia on which another village stood. Numbers of great trading canoes, with hooped and grass-thatched shelters set amidships to protect the traders' wives and families from the day-long sun, were tied up to heavy stakes upon the bank, floating

idly on the rippling brown stream just as I had seen them in my first days at Lokoja, 400 miles away down stream.

We wandered round the market here, where in the little booths were Manchester cotton goods, cheap mirrors and trade stuff brought from the south by river transport, and bought some copper bangles made by the local smiths.

In the evenings Diggle and I with Una, his English pointer bitch, went shooting on the dry mud flats up stream with a party of beaters to drive the flocks of guinea-fowl out of cover over us, and had the best of sport there for an hour or two, returning laden with the kill.

Our next stage was by barge for 40 miles down the Niger to Boussa town at the head of the rapids. We got on board after an early breakfast, slipping away at an easy pace down stream with the hospitable Diggle waving us farewell from the station landing-place, and helped by a steady current our polers without exertion took us down some 30 miles to an island camp where a grass shelter had been put up for our night's camp. The third member of our party excitedly accompanied me on my shooting trips and helped to recover the whistling teal which I got from time to time. This was a black dog, half pointer, half native pie dog, blessed with a most affectionate disposition and the true sporting instinct, but cursed with the name of Ichthy, short for *Ichthyosaurus*, one of a litter to whom an original owner had bestowed on each the name of prehistoric reptiles. He was a great companion to my wife and myself, and he did the trek with us in capital style, adapting himself to the different forms of conveyance—motor, barge and

hammock—with equal complacency, and enjoying every moment of it.

The island held a fishing village of some size, and on this day of our arrival the weekly market was being held, at which the men of other villages on both sides of the Niger collected for a jamboree. Some of them were magnificent fellows almost stark naked and decorated in fantastic fashion with their gala kit of copper bangles, necklaces of bright blue or red beads, and nose or earrings of brass. As the night fell the drums beat louder, dancing went on amid frenzied yelling, and from our camp, half a mile away, we could hear it late into the night. The attraction of this merry-making was too much for our boys, who disappeared after dinner to take part in it, returning in the early hours with some signs of having had their share of native liquor. Next morning we tumbled into the barge again at daybreak and poled down to Boussa. A mile or two above the landing-place the river became crowded with rocky islands, among which we turned and twisted down narrow channels with the current rushing fast, already beginning to feel the draw of the first of the rapids. At one spot a piece of tumbling water gave us a mild idea of what the real bad water below must be like as we slipped between projecting teeth of rock and swerved with frantic pole-thrusts to avoid great boulders which heaved themselves above the white race down which we hurried. Then as we passed through it, floating on more calmly, we made a dive up a still narrower alley and came to rest among canoes tied up at Boussa landing-place. Here we were met by Hoskyns Abrahall, the young officer in charge of Boussa and Kaiama, who was to escort us through his district.



A NIGER RAPID



THE NARROW CHANNEL

He was delighted at our coming, and the visit being something of an event, since only one other white woman had ever been to Kaiama, had most thoughtfully done his best to ensure our comfort, even to the hiring of a cow which would accompany us inland to Kaiama and give us fresh milk. The three of us spent a couple of days at Boussa, where a matter of removing the old chief of Boussa's headquarters required some discussion; and, since no Resident had been there for some time, I was particular to visit and inspect the chief's house and treasury and native prison, and show personally the rather long-delayed interest in their institutions which all natives appreciate so much. Abrahall was indefatigable and keen as mustard on his work, and the whole healthy evidence of the way in which native administration even in miniature was being carried on in this little pagan State was a pleasant example of how well these solitary young fellows do their work. The old chief was a bit of a thorn in the flesh to all of us, and my junior and I discussed him with some head-shaking, while I gave the old pagan earnest warnings which were of course forgotten by him as soon as I had left. At Boussa other loads of kit and hammocks met us, having come by a more direct route from Kontagora, with some of my native staff with hammock bearers. Our horses had been left on the other side of the Niger to await us at another point, for there was tsetse fly in the area of bush along the river, and even round Kaiama. Abrahall had brought a pony in on which he rode, but I did not wish to risk mine, and meant to walk and hammock till I came round again.

In due course we all set off on our four days' march along a road which had been lined and made with much

good work and thought through the rough country. At one of our halts a quaint old character was presented to me in the person of the village headman. Abrahall had told me about him, and suggested I should question him about a certain lion story which all the country knew of. This I did, and the old gentleman, with the gravest assurance, gave me the facts. For many years he said a lion had lived in the hills close by his village. He was a kindly animal, doing no harm to people or goats, and in return the chief had daily laid out food for him at night, which Leo much appreciated, becoming at last so tame that he would come about the compound like a house cat and, one may suppose, purred with pleasure at his food. One day some traders from the south heard the story and ridiculed it with such open mirth that from that very day the lion disappeared and hid his hurt and his shame for ever away from men. Unlike the traders we did not laugh, but commiserated with our ancient friend, so perchance the lion, if he yet lives, may return once more, his ruffled feelings soothed.

We left this pleasant spot before the morning light, crossing a picturesque river bed in the flare of great grass torches, and winding up between twin hills heard the baboons barking furiously at the unaccustomed light and noise of our procession. At our next camp—the last before Kaiama—the village chief was a woman, as is often the case among the Borgu people. The Magajia, as she was termed, was a fine-looking woman with all her wits about her, more intelligent than the native women mostly are, and from the way she arranged supplies and gave her orders it was plain she was as capable a ruler as any male, and more so than many I have known.

I tried for bush cow here, but without success,

although I came across plenty of tracks, but I was not out for serious shooting and expected little for my pains. Abrahall rode on ahead from this village to make all ready and bring out the young Emir of Kaiama to meet us in the morning, and the following day we made an easy march of it and entered the station by breakfast time. Here Abrahall was at home and gave us noble entertainment accompanied by his tame paroquet which wandered round the table prepared to help himself to what he fancied. He was an amusing bird, albeit a trifle ruffled for the moment, for he had had an altercation with a dog some days before and lost nearly his life and many of his feathers in the process.

We spent a day or two here with work and straightening out some small problems of administration. The young chief of Kaiama, though rather shy and hesitating in his manner, was a good type of ruler, superior in every way to his brother chief of Boussa, and his various branches of administration were clean little models of what they ought to be. The lonely little government station was well kept, and a fruit and vegetable garden was doing well and was a great interest to the maker.

My work was finished here and our plans were made for returning by another route. This was an adventure into the almost unknown, by a hunter's track which led direct to Leaba, a town lying below all the rapids of the Niger, 50 miles farther down the river than Boussa. Our journey was close on 50 miles, but we were to sleep at a village a mile or two from Kaiama, and from that point to Leaba there was only one compound about half-way, belonging to a Borgu hunter who had made a little farm there, living his solitary life unworried and unvisited by all. This was real bush. My wife was the first white

woman to pass through it, and for all I know is still the only one who ever has, making the whole distance in two long marches, walking and hammocking alternately, and coming through in great style.

We usually started from our camps between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. so as to get well forward before the heat came on us, and our caravan upon the march in the darkness was really a most picturesque sight. The relief hammock-bearers and spare boys tore up great sheaves of the long dry grass by the roadside and, using them as torches, lit fresh ones continuously to give us constant light to see the track. I remember that on one march we came to a deep dry river bed 60 yards across, with steep banks of 50 feet or more in depth. My wife's hammock was on in front, when I, who was walking at the rear of the carriers, came on to the brink. The steep descent and stiffer climb beyond required plenty of light to see by, and I think there were fifty torches blazing high. Men stood on both brinks and along the stream bed, while up the farther side climbed and struggled my wife and hammock like some queer animal striving to escape out of a pit of fire. The scene was like a stage inferno or witches' cavern, with black devils scurrying to and fro, their dark faces reddened by the torches' glow, white teeth and eyeballs gleaming.

We pushed off for the Kaiama hamlet late one afternoon, when the heat and glare were over, bidding good-bye to Abrahall, who was off next day to another part of his district, and that night turned in early for the start into the new bush. A small grass-hut roof had gone forward to be put on poles so that we might break the first march for an hour or two and escape the midday heat. Hammock marching is a slow business, especially through

uncleared bush, and we did not make much more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour over the rough country. Personally I found travelling in this way rather tiring. I am built too long or crankily to find comfort in a jolting hammock, and I walked fully half of the whole distance. My wife adapted herself excellently to the shaking, swaying thing, and bore with much patience the long hours. The wily Ichthy had long ago discovered the value of the hammock's rest and shade as soon as the hot hours came, and made no bones about jumping in and settling down at her feet.

By this time two little red and green love-birds, purchased in Kaiama, had joined our company in a small grass-stalk cage, and some strange balancing feats went on as my wife tried to keep herself, the dog, the cage of paroquets and half a dozen small oddments in the hammock at the same time.

After some five hours' struggle through the bush, we reached our roof-tree and spent the hot hours there. The harmattan of the cold weather was gone, and the sun poured down with sweltering heat, so that we were glad enough of the shelter, inadequate as it was; but at three o'clock we started again, for we had far to go. It was a great game country. In the hard, dry mud of the narrow path I saw quantities of tracks, antelope, bush cow and leopard, and at one spot the huge footprints of a solitary elephant, like small hip-baths in the dried marsh ground. An old rogue elephant was known to haunt this bit of country, and I have little doubt these were the signs of his passage in the previous rains.

It was night again, with a young moon hanging in the west, when we reached the hunter's compound, and hurried over our meal to get as much sleep as we could

before the next day's start, and soon the whole camp was silent and in slumber. We had come along well so far, but a yet harder march was in front of us and I wanted to get away earlier than usual. Long practice has made me a reliable waker, and my watch showed two o'clock when I roused the camp to get upon the road again.

Once more we all moved off by torchlight, and in sleepy silence tramped along to get as far as we could before sun up. The going was slow and difficult here, over country broken up by constant deep and rocky gullies which took endless time to negotiate. I watched the coming of the dawn with disgust, as one does when cool travelling is wanted, for we had not made many miles for all our early start, and by nine o'clock we had not reached our half-way mark. We halted then, however, by a clear stream of water, and picking out the shadiest looking tree we spent our time in camp chairs, shifting round hour by hour as the sun moved his burning course across the blue brass sky. It was a grilling day, and the shade was so moderate under the scanty foliage of the bush tree that we decided to get on again at two o'clock with some sixteen more miles to cover to the Niger bank. It was a bit of an endurance test for every one. The carriers and hammock men had worked well, and had not had much food since they left Kaiama, but all buckled to with a will, eager to reach Leaba and a hearty meal. Hour by hour we marched on through that long hot afternoon, moving in a haze of flagging energies.

Hour by hour the track wound on, rising and dipping over the bush swells, and as evening drew near, the shadows stretching longer and longer across the



THE PASSAGE PERILOUS



AN UPSTREAM STRUGGLE

path, we climbed a stony hill pass, sighting from the top the Niger valley and the dim blue hills upon the far side of the river. There were still more miles to march, and presently the night shut down upon our going as we plodded wearily on in pale thin moonlight, and I heard the hammock men begin to grumble at the distance and wonder how much farther they must go. Then we struck a farm, the first for over 40 miles, and every one revived at the sight of human life. I was walking ahead now with the dog running at my heels, and all the caravan strung out behind. More farmland and yet more farms touching one on the other, and presently a broader track, a little makeshift bridge across a gully, all tokens that we were getting near the end. We reached the river flats, with bits of marshy ground and sandy patches on the road. A line of white mist showed where the river lay, and away to the right the sound of barking dogs told us of some hamlet lying there. The road twisted on for another heart-breaking mile, and so the end came as I stumbled into the rest-camp compound perched on the Niger bank, and looked down upon the slow passing stream. In a few moments the hammocks came swaying in, the loads not far behind, and thankfully we settled down, with knowledge of an easy rest day on the morrow, and of a long bush march put well behind us and safely ended.

The next phase of our journey was up the Niger to see the different rapids, and the work which was being done at one of them, the Awuru rapids, by an officer of the Marine Department, Lieutenant Nosworthy, who was blowing up some of the most dangerous rocks with explosives. The Niger here flowed through a straight, deep rocky channel 2 miles long, very dangerous for

canoe traffic, but which was risked by native traders at flood-time to save the long and difficult portage round. As many as a hundred big trade canoes a year were wrecked in this evil stretch, and we were trying to help the river trade by lessening the more difficult rocks. We met Nosworthy doing great work at Awuru. He had fired over four thousand charges and done a lot to minimize the danger of the passage, and was later on going to do the same at the smaller rapids of Potashi, Malali and Garafini, higher up. The river was low while this work was being done, and the passages are too dangerous to try at all; but at mid-water they are a fine sight, and though I myself have never shot them, the officers on the Niger who had done so told me it was a nerve-wracking experience.

From Awuru we passed on to Potashi, where I wished to see an alluvial gold-washing camp on the Niger. The march along the bank was only 7 miles, but half-way we had to get over the dry rocky bed of the Oli River which entered the Niger here. It was an extraordinary sight. The width of the Oli was under 100 yards, but it took an hour to get the hammocks and loads across. The whole bed was choked and filled with enormous rocks, some round and water-worn, others rising in spires and razor-edged slabs over 20 feet in height. It was like a model of a miniature Alpine track. The loads and hammocks had to be hauled up and down, pushed round and lowered over this craggy ground; and I imagine that the river, when filled, is quite unnavigable for any canoe just here. Seated up above on the high overhanging bank, we watched the laborious passage of the caravan, and, after long delay, collected them on the farther side and soon after reached

the landing-place opposite Potashi island, where we were ferried over in a narrow cranky canoe. Work in the gold camp had been stopped for a few weeks while the partners, four Australian miners, were out prospecting elsewhere, so we did not see the actual gold panning. Subsequently Mr. Gillio, one of the prospectors, met us in Kontagora and kindly gave my wife a sample of the gold washed from the Niger bed. Gold mining in Nigeria is not a serious proposition as yet, and perhaps it never will be, although there are a number of mining leases held about the different provinces; but after all expenses have been paid a very modest return is gained, as a rule, by those who make the venture.

From Potashi island we crossed the other half of the river and landed in the Kontagora Emirate once more, where we camped at a small village a day's march from Auna, our next place of meeting, with a District Officer. I spent the day checking a population count by my native staff, for the paper figures of this remote village had seemed unsatisfactory. It was here also that the little green paroquets met with an untimely end. We had ourselves slept out in the open, and entering the rest-house in the early morning found the grass cage bent and broken, with just a blood-stained feather left to show that they had been eaten by some big rats who often take up their abode in the little-used houses. It was a regrettable business, for they were a pretty pair and very tame.

A long stretch took us into Auna, where we met Cowper, the officer in charge of Kontagora division, and spent a full day there on our affairs. Auna was a large and prosperous town lying on the great trade route which ran from Sokoto, 300 miles or more, to

Jebba, following the Niger bank for two-thirds of the way. It was the cattle road as well, and along it day after day in the dry weather one could see great herds of cattle with flocks of sheep and goats passing from the northern pastures to the markets of the south. Here, too, dyeing was a healthy industry, and we visited the large group of dye pits made of plastered lime and other composition, watching the process of steeping the gowns and cloths in the evil-smelling mixture of indigo which is grown locally. Cowper was employed in a reassessment of his district, moving round from town to town with the district chief, and a day later, after a pleasant dinner at our camp, we left him to his work there, moving on the last stage of our round into Kontagora, five days away.

We travelled now by night with a good moon to light us, and over a decent road again, for the month of March had come with burning days. I had got to horseback again after many days of Shank's mare, and rode pleasantly enough through the quiet moonlight. The hammock men were a trifle leg weary by this time, for the four men at the cross-pieces of the supporting pole have an awkward load to bear, and one that all carriers dislike. My own hammock being empty now, I put more reliefs on to the other, and we swung along at a better pace, getting over the long marches with less fatigue and in shorter time. My wife had had nearly enough of the game for the time being, and I was glad when we rode down over the last uplands round Kontagora one evening after a last bush dinner 10 miles out, and saw the fires twinkling in the town.

The faithful black dog, which had trotted round the journey with us in good style, met a bit of trouble within



DYE-PITS

sight of home, for his excursion off the road among some loose stones brought him into contact with a scorpion, who paid him back for his inquisitiveness with a hearty sting, thereby reducing the good Ichthy to tearful yelps and whines which lasted for an hour until the pain wore off. I sympathized with him greatly, for I too have felt that poisonous stab, and know what the agony is for a time.

Kontagora town lay sleeping when we passed the southern gate and wound through the streets and alleys and out again on to the station road. I rode along in the quiet darkness, going over in my mind the different incidents of our journey. We had covered some 350 miles in the twenty-five days since we left our mud-house in Kontagora, had visited three divisions, and passed through some wild and little traversed country, returning all of us a little travel-stained but none the worse for the touring in the bush. We reached our compound and the journey's end. For a few minutes the noise and bustle of unstrapping loads and putting them inside the house went on amid the talk and laughter of the carriers. Then all was finished; the native staff bade us good-night, the retreating footsteps of the crowd sounded fainter and fainter in the distance, and silence came down once more upon the sleeping station.

CHAPTER XI

THE TWELFTH TOUR

THE month of May 1923 saw me once more lying off the West African coast at daylight, in the *Addah*, and steaming into the lagoon of Lagos. The voyage had been a pleasant one. The *Addah*—latest addition to the fleet—was a motor-ship, a great improvement on the old *Akabo*. Things had changed a lot since my first trip out. Then it was the rarest thing to see women on board except passengers for the Canary Islands. This time we had fifty-two with us, and all bound for West African ports. So life on shipboard was a thing of gaiety, dances, fancy-dress dinners, concerts, pretty frocks and sports in which the ladies took their share, all of which would have astounded the coasters of thirty years ago.

We went in, piloted, through the twin stone breakwaters which year by year are pushing farther out to sea from the flat foreshore to keep the bar from silting up, passing the Government dredger hard at work in the channel. A mile up we had left the ugly fringe of coast and began to pass the outlying bungalows of Lagos. The whole town is built on reclaimed land, on dumped soil and sand, and nowhere stands more than a few feet above sea-level. On the right of the harbour, lawns of the most perfect green ran down to the water's edge,

with mangoes, limes and flowering trees about them all. Behind ran the Marina, the long, straight road leading from the centre of the town past the club-house, golf course, and tennis courts out to the seashore, with Government house and the wireless station standing back from it. Away on the other side were the new wharves of Apapa under construction, and farther beyond Iddo island and the railway terminus for the north. We berthed on the Lagos side at the Customs wharf, where the Lagos people got ashore while we began the weary business of transhipping to a tender. It was six or seven hours before we were through with this, and crossing over were spilt out on Iddo wharf beside the boat-train. The getting through the Customs took other hours ; but those of us who had done this so many times before got hold of Lagos friends to take us off to tea and comfort while our kit sorted itself, returning towards nightfall to battle with the different native clerks who gave papers to sign, and took our cash for duties on spirits and tobacco. It was a pelting afternoon with a thunderstorm banging overhead, and as soon as possible I drove off again with Tomlinson in the secretariat for native affairs, to dine and join the train at nine o'clock when it was scheduled to start. It was a cheery meal with two other men going north as well, and in the pitch black rainy night we were driven down over Carter bridge, which connects the mainland with the island, at a furious pace, which seems to be the fashion among Lagos cars.

Once more after many years I was to go back to Bauchi, my old original province, and this time I was to get to it by rail and not by river. Six hundred miles to Zaria and then on to Jos by narrow gauge line.

I turned in to my sleeping berth at once, for the landing day is always a long one, and passed the usual uneasy hours of partial sleep while the train thundered on through the night and the unseen tropic country of the south. Past Abeokuta, the capital of old Egbaland, once a separate kingdom, and Ibadan of the Yoruba country, huge towns lying hidden in the darkness, we clattered and rocked on until at daylight we reached Oshogbo, and by breakfast time drew in to Offa, the boundary between north and south.

The Nigerian railway, before the amalgamation of north and south, was two systems, the Lagos-Jebba and the Baro-Kano lines, each made and run under its own Protectorate regulations. The extension of the first line from Jebba carried it on to Zungeru, whence it was eventually linked up by a 35-mile stretch to the second, which ran from Baro on the Niger straight north to Kano, and passing Kaduna, now the capital of the northern provinces. At the present time yet another branch is being built from Port Harcourt on the seacoast creek south of Lagos through the coalfields of Udi on across the Benue River to meet the main line at Kaduna junction. The Baro-Kano section used to be called by the humorists the Fred Karno railway, and a lot of badinage and jesting took place at the expense of the department, and does still, regarding the expenditure upon it, the delays and irregularity of the running, and the cost of freight.

The time-tables were amusing, and it certainly seemed unnecessarily precise to state that the boat train from Lagos, running on a journey of over 700 miles through tropical Africa with such difficulties to contend with as washouts, derailments and the troubles of a light-ballasted track, would arrive at Kano at 5.35 p.m.

That the train would as often as not snort in to Kano nearer midnight than 5.35, only gave further ground for ribald mirth or annoyance at this meticulous scheduling.

For an African railway the service is a good one—for all the criticism—and the express has frequently done the distance in a little over forty hours, with line maintenance and station signal work run by native labour only. Sleeping berths are good, a decent restaurant car is attached, and but for the dirt and dust inseparable from poor coal and African soil there is not much to grumble at.

We reached the Niger at Jebba in sixteen hours, steaming slowly across the great bridge which spans the river there, a fine piece of work, though the cost in time and money for the building of it was considerable. It replaces the old train ferry, which used to take the carriages over two by two, a four hours' job, and it stands to-day, its white piers gleaming in the brown-green water of the river, a good monument of engineering effort and the heart-breaking difficulties of its building. Through a long hot afternoon we pulled up heavily out of the Niger valley, clattering onwards through the Nupe province, which I had had charge of in my previous tour, passing well-remembered stations with their pleasant sounding Nupe names—Bokani, Charati, Mokwa—and at nightfall, hot, dirty and cramped, we reached Zungeru. The old headquarters capital, abandoned now for some years, is a very scene of desolation. Bungalows have been robbed of all useful material for Kaduna, and roofless stand with crackling brick walls and blind window holes, old gloomy relics of the past. The old compounds lie overgrown with rank grass and flowering shrubs run riot, and the ruins of the old cantonment are being swallowed up by the unconquerable bush.

At nine o'clock next morning we entered Zaria, the place of parting of the ways. Of my companions some had reached their journey's end ; one was riding north-west to Sokoto along the old road I knew so well when that had been my province ; others were going on to Kano and Bornu, again old ground to me ; and the rest of us were starting in an hour to Jos. This journey was a slow one of ten more hours, first over the Zaria plains and then, as the sun went down, a tedious crawl up into the Bauchi hills and a final snorting struggle on to the plateau, and it was not until nine that night that I reached the end, and found an old friend, Bovill of the political who was in charge of Jos division, and who took me off to dine with him and his wife in their most comfortable quarters.

Hospitality is an outstanding feature of Nigerian social life. In all the years I spent there I never knew it fail, not merely in the entertainment of the traveller and passer-by, but in the providing of necessities which he may be short of or for the moment unable to get at from his kit ; and among a group of Europeans on any station every one does his best to dine and wine his fellows. I have tried this hospitality everywhere, from a dinner at some Lagos bungalow, with table appointments and cooking equal to an English home, down to the bush dinner on a small camp table, with a smoking kerosene lamp, where the food is chiefly from a tin, and at all of them there is the same good flavour of the will to give of the best there is, and one of my pleasantest memories of the country is the geniality of my reception at them all.

The plateau had changed out of recognition since I had seen it last. In 1906 Bukeru, a few miles south of



RE-ROOFING THE HOUSE

Jos, was the site of the lonely District Officer's mud hut, where Francis had worked among the pagans, and with a detachment of police or troops from Bauchi had toured unceasingly, leading a strenuous and risky life. Jos was then a pagan group of villages intractable as all its fellow tribes were, and Naraguta, 5 miles north of Jos, had not then become the temporary headquarters of the province and was the home of yet another tribe. The existence of tin on the plateau had been known for several years before that time. At Lirue n'Dalma, a village 20 miles from Jos, all the inhabitants were tin smelters. They dug up the tin-bearing soil along the streams, washed out the concentrate and heated it in their furnaces, running the metal into small channels made by inserting thick grass straws into a mud covering; the mud dried hard after the stalks were removed, and into the runnels left they poured the molten tin, which cooled off and was broken out in the form of thin sticks of metal. This was called "dalma" by the natives after the village, and "straw tin" by the trading companies on the far off Benue River, whither the native traders bought it for barter.

In 1905 or 1906 the Niger Company sent up two of their agents, Messrs. Laws and Archbold, to prospect and inquire into the prospects of winning tin, and from that point started the mining industry which is going on in the Bauchi highlands to-day. As the years passed, the field spread ever wider, prospectors came out from Europe in shoals, all likely ground was taken up, and camps were dotted along every stream which, rising on the plateau, tumbled down the valleys and escarpments to the lower lands.

Excitement ran high, the matter took on the nature

of a boom, and there were not wanting sundry Government officials who considered throwing up their jobs and joining in the hunt after cassiterite. One I knew of, fired with enthusiasm and a discovery, tendered his resignation ; his find proved to be only iron pyrites, and, luckily for him, the Government allowed him to reconsider his decision and he resumed his work a chastened man. The boom came with a flourish. Wild rumours ran about the city at home of lode discoveries and rich finds of alluvial, and huge cash offers were made to those who had any sort of prospecting right or chance of getting one. Properties changed hands hourly, with progressive profits to the home financiers, and the latest owners in due time sent out their agents to start work. They did not find the tin so easy to win profitably as they had expected, and before long labour shortage, transport difficulties, freight charges and a restricted water supply began, like bogies, to affright them, while desperate endeavours to make some of the properties pay their way ended in dismal failure. Eventually matters became more stabilized. The well-backed companies not over capitalized, which could instal machinery and work the ground cheaply, became profit-earning concerns of value, while others more handicapped dropped out, so sold their rights to others. A few clung on to their properties, but worked them with European tributers who produced the tin at a fixed price per ton, making their profit over it also. The mining field was worked extravagantly in many cases by the use of native tributers in place of paid enrolled labour, for these tributers dug and panned the tin in the easiest spots, soon leaving them wastefully half-worked to try other places. Being paid on the amount of ore he produced

the tributer cared little where he worked, saving himself labour and clearing off to his village after he had earned enough for immediate needs.

In the meanwhile the poor native smelters of Lirue found their occupation and livelihood rapidly being taken from them, and in 1911 I was deputed to take up on their behalf a small plot of 100 acres of unworked ground, to beacon it and hand it over for their sole use. This action came too late, for all the good ground had been taken up, their plot was of little value to them, and not long after Government compensated the smelters financially for the loss of their industry, and all the village turned farmers like their neighbours. I visited the village in 1923 and found them unconcernedly tilling their farms, the old occupation entirely forgotten.

In this year Jos and the whole plateau had become a busy place. A big township had sprung up, with stores and banks and a flourishing market. Good houses on the mining properties, one at least electrically lit, were put up, and gardens wonderful for Africa laid out with a mass of roses and most European flowers growing well. All over the high levels and down to the lower camps light motor roads mostly made by the mines ran out for a radius of 40 or 50 miles, and nearly every one had a car. Life was cheerful, with dances, race meetings and sports of all kinds, and the conditions seemed pleasanter than in most parts of the country in a climate which was certainly the least enervating in Nigeria.

I stayed but forty-eight hours there, for my orders were for Bauchi itself; and haste being essential, I had a Government car and lorry to take me down—over the 80 miles. About half the road was made and bridged by the Public Works Department, but the rest

was still a bush road, cleared and roughly levelled, but innocent as yet of any metalling. I knew the line of country well enough, for I had myself in 1912 made the first rough track from Bauchi to the foot-hills of the plateau, and over it the first motor-car which Bauchi ever saw had bumped its way successfully. I say bumped advisedly, for I was quite alone on its construction, an amateur at the business, with unskilled labour, native tools, and with no more knowledge of gradients and alignment than common sense and necessity could teach me. My pagans and I did 45 miles of it, and there were some comic twists and horrible grades in it to negotiate the rocks and stream beds. It was an amusing time, with plenty of hard riding up and down, the organization of some thousands of labourers whom I feasted at intervals with sheep and cattle, and an ultimate success in so far as it brought the Lieutenant-Governor's car into Bauchi at an average speed of 17 miles an hour, which for those days was a useful bush performance. Some parts of that old track are still in use, as I saw when I passed over it.

I left Jos on a bright morning in the early rains after a farewell breakfast with the Bovills, and following the foot of the Naraguta hills reached the first descent at Rafin Jaki. From this lip of the plateau the country falls in two giant steps to the plains of Bauchi, 2000 feet below. A first fall of 700 feet or so, a gradual slight gradient of 30 miles, and then another big drop to the low levels. The view before me was exhilarating. On the right hand stretched the range of the Jarawa mountains, running with a bold and rugged outline for 20 miles along our route. To the left the Delimi River hurried on its way to reach the lower ground, bearing away to the hills of Wuno to find an easier path, and far in front

of the barrier of the Kwandon Kaya range lay across our road. The car wound slowly down the Rafin Jaki slope, and going easily in two hours brought us to Magama under the frowning rocks. Just here the engine sulked awhile and gave my native driver, Davies, half an hour of tinkering, then on we went, winding in and out the boulders which in the old days used to choke the pass, and crossing deep and well-bridged stream beds, till we came out upon the great bare slope of Panshanu, falling at a steep angle down 400 feet below. The road here is an engineering feat, running diagonally down and across the slope, built up with concrete walls and with a gradient steep but practicable. I halted the car for a moment to look out over the wonderful panorama spread out in front of me. Fifty miles away I saw the Boule mountain, under whose wing the town of Bauchi lies. The middle distance was broken by the hills of Dass, their jagged shapes and spires standing boldly up like scenic hills on a theatre stage, and to the left front the king of all Zaranda, a mighty isolated mass rising 4200 feet above sea-level and 2000 feet above the plain. Every hill and rocky shape dotted wide over the huge expanse of bush was an old familiar landmark to me after eleven years of absence from the province. In those intervening years I had sampled the arid, rolling wastes of Bornu, where hills are not, the sandy country of Sokoto and the Kano plains, and after so much monotonous and featureless scenery I found the hills and ranges of Bauchi invigorating and refreshing. Old town names came to my lips after all that time—Jemari, Polchi, Bichiki lying there below me, and memories of old climbing and exploring days; the struggle up the big Dass hill, and the unpleasant moment when I clung and crawled in stock-

inged feet up the bald crown of Yuli rock, which only two of us had climbed at that time and not many since—and then we went downward, with the car well braked, out into that open country.

I rolled into Bauchi at four o'clock and there found Fremantle, the Resident, who gave me tea and news of the old, well-remembered station. I had made quick time on the journey from Lagos, 750 miles by train and 80 by car in fifty-one travelling hours, a very different timing to that other one of long ago from Burutu to Bauchi in about six weeks. The old slow crawl up from the coast by water and carrier transport was more leisurely and in many ways more pleasant, but the waste of time and cost of paying big caravans of labourers was a serious expense to Government, and the present system is economical in the long-run. One's kit suffers more nowadays passing through the hands of native dockers and train labourers, and loss and breakages are common; but at the cost of this and a few hours grimy, shaky journeying on wheels, we save a lot of useful time.

My programme for the tour was to take charge of the Bauchi Emirate until Fremantle went on leave in six months or so, and then relieve him in charge of the province, though in the event things did not turn out as we planned then, owing to my tour being cut short; but I took over the Emirate from Morgan, the District Officer, and settled down to pick up threads.

Divisional work was strange to me after being away from it so long, for it was more than four years since I had been a District Officer. The small details and problems of work closely connected with native administration reminded me forcibly of the earliest efforts in that very place. Many of the old faces I had known were still in



A CEREMONIAL VISIT

Bauchi town : Yakubu, the Emir, whom I had seen in 1906 in dire disgrace as a district headman and given punishment for his misdeeds, to blossom out later as a chastened ruler ; the chief native judge, who was a scribe when I first knew him, but always a loyal, hard-working fellow and an authority on the law ; the old Ajia, district headman, now well over seventy, a great character but a bit of a backslider ; and a host of others whose faces if not all their names came back to me when they rolled up day after day, to beam at me as if I had been their dearest friend, and had never had a cross word with them in the past. Some I missed whom death or disgrace had removed from the land. They are a conservative people, and in all the changes of European officers who come and go among them they welcome back with something near to pleasure the ones who first dealt with them, for it takes them some time to get really used to us and our ways. So we all met again in good fellowship, our conversations larded with "Do you remember ?" and "What has become of So-and-so ?" until our news was told and we settled down to work.

The Emirate had progressed well in some branches since I had last seen it, and not so well in others. That was quite the usual thing in all divisions I had seen, for the individuality of officers shows itself very clearly in their work. Everybody follows out most loyally the settled line of policy laid down by higher quarters, but it is natural that some special features which particularly interest one man are pushed on more than others. In one place you will find the native prisons a model of what they should be, in another assessment takes the lead, in another law work is specialized in, and so on. In the case of Bauchi, the revenue collection was in

arrears, and a good deal of whip and spur was needed to smarten up the districts and bring them into line. For the rest, six months of the tour passed in the same routine fashion of other tours, trekking and office work, assessment and road expansion and the hundred duties of the unchanging work.

In October my wife joined me again—her fifth time in the country—for the last months of the tour. Our house was the usual mud and thatch affair, but substantial and as comfortable as we could make it. It had two fair-sized rooms roofed with mud, and a wide veranda with outside mud pillars which supported the over-all roof of grass thatch. Houses of this type are cooler during the day than brick or wooden bungalows, but at night the mud walls almost glow with the heat absorbed all day, and don't cool off for hours. The floors of beaten earth are smooth and cool at first, but soon rub loose with European boots on them and give off an unending dust which lies on everything. The big outer roof had generally a snake or two in it, and a lot of queer things, besides rats, three kinds of lizards and a big monstrosity, the *guza*, a cross between a lizard and iguana, whose bite was poisonous; while up in the dark apex mosquitoes, spiders, scorpions and other pests lived comfortably. The white ant, which takes possession of everything, had the run of the house. He is the destroyer, the *nagwamache* of Nigerian houses. He wanders up inside mud walls or brick, from below ground comes out through floors, even concrete where it cracks. He will ruin a saddle comfortably in a night, or in a week will hollow out the wooden rail of a veranda till it squashes like a rotten orange under your hand.

White ants defeat all permanency in building.



SNAKE CHARMING



SNAKE CHARMING

Ant-proof courses in walls, tar, solignum on wood, try what you like, the little fellows laugh at it, and carry on as busily as ever. The man who invents an ant-proof house for the tropics will make a fortune.

Our life for the last few months was a quiet one. My health was indifferent, and we didn't take much part in station life, though we had some pleasant gatherings in our compound in the evenings. Fremantle, the most energetic of men, built a squash racket court out of the ruined walls of a disused bungalow, and encouraged sport of all kinds. There were ten or twelve of us at one time, of whom four were ladies, and for a bush station this was a crowd.

Tom Iddah, *alias* Yakubu, *alias* cookie, was to the last the mainstay of the house, and ruled as my wife's second-in-command the kitchen and farmyard of ducks and chickens.

We had no pet animals this tour. At different times I have had a quaint collection, among them marabout storks, ground hornbills, crown bird, cranes and bustard. The menagerie used to have young wart-hogs, a baboon and several sorts of monkeys, young reed buck, gazelle and duiker, one of the last a red and rather uncommon species which my wife brought up by hand and fed with milk from a fountain-pen filler. A porcupine, young jackals and a bush cat complete the list.

All these animals became quickly tame except the porcupine, which was a disgruntled beast, and used to stamp his feet with rage whenever I came near him and become a spiky fury.

We did one trek to Ningi, an independent district on the Kano border, and coming back I had some crocodile shooting on the backwaters of the Bunga

Government hospital awaiting the down boat-train. At Iddo wharf my old companion of first experiences came to see us and to say good-bye. Grier was now Secretary for Native Affairs, living permanently in Lagos, and one of the seniors of the Government staff. We discussed the old days and the new awhile, and then went aboard the *Addah* once again. From my long chair on the deck I watched for the last time the houses and green lawns of Lagos slipping past, then Five Cowrie creek, the mangroves and the breakwater, maybe a foot or two longer than it was. Across the bar we swung round to the right, heading for Accra and home; the low flat shore receded fast, the white surf breaking ever on the sands; the lonely lighthouse faded gradually from white to grey, became a dim small point in the far distance; then that too vanished and we were at sea.

CHAPTER XII

REFLECTIONS

I WONDER if reminiscences of any life or country are best set down soon after one has got away from it, or if one should rather wait a year or two and get a wider view, toned down by time.

When they are just impressions written as these have been, straight from memory without one book of reference except a tattered old map of Nigeria to recall place-names, it is wiser to write them quickly. For there is a troublesome thing we call the West African memory, a heritage of long sojourn there, which soon might dim the mind, leaving nothing but a vague retrospect rather as when Sierra Leone mountain from the steamer's stern rail fades and blurs into one blue-grey whole, losing all detail of the spurs and valleys.

It was a great life. The first years were fascinating in their freedom, their chances of initiative, and in the necessity for self-reliance. The jobs to do were legion, mostly new, and there were few to ask advice of. One's Chief had more than enough to do to spend time in answering plaintive questions, every one was doing five men's work, and nobody had time to waste. Legal knowledge was not much wanted, experience had yet to come, and common sense was the chief asset in those days—as it is in these. When things went wrong your

discussion of the local work. It is talked by most of us, often *ad nauseam*, and would bore outsiders to distraction. Jones yarns away about his assessment work, and Smith about his bridge-building, until sometimes you want to throw the bottle at them ; but for all that it is better so, and you pour them out another drink instead, in memory of the days when you too talked like that and thought there was no other subject like it. Everybody backs each other up in all ways, and if there is a grouser here and there he grouses about small things, and in the big is generally the best goer of the lot.

In the last year or two an association of Civil Servants has been formed. It has done much good ; voices opinions and grievances, and helps local interests. So long as it is conducted in the spirit it has now, it is an institution for good.

Nigeria has been fortunate in its Governors. Old Northern Nigeria had first Sir Frederick Lugard, the great administrative pioneer, followed by Sir Percy Girouard, who speeded up the railway development, and last Sir Henry Hesketh Ball. Amalgamation brought Sir Frederick Lugard back for a time, and at the present time Sir Hugh Clifford administers the Government. Junior officers do not see a great deal of their supreme chiefs, naturally enough. I was no exception, and for many years my personal acquaintance with them was limited. When I did meet them, especially the last two, I was immensely struck by the sympathetic understanding of our difficulties and the kindly treatment they showed to all of us. Official ceremonies or durbars are apt to cause an atmosphere of restraint and tension. The general cleaning up and smartening which takes place before the arrival of a Governor at some bush



STRAW PLAINTING

station causes sleepless nights to some young officers ; but if they only knew it, the "eyewash" part of it is quite discounted by His Excellency, and the real value sized up ; for one can be very sure that a man like Sir Hugh, with his long varied service, has forgotten more than many of us ever knew about administration and its arts.

The Government machine was a small affair in early Northern Nigeria. Little embryo departments of political, treasury, Marine, and public works, with police customs and medical services, composed it, feebly staffed and financially starved. We all knew each other personally or very intimately by name, and, widespread as we were, a bond of *cameraderie* joined us as one. It was all quite simple. The political administered and deputized for other departments ; the marine pushed us along the waterways when they could find craft to take us ; the doctors doctored anybody within reach, and often out of it ; and the public works men tried in old time-honoured fashion to make bricks without straw ; while the treasury stood by and said to every one—"no funds." The W.A.F.F. and police protected us, and proved what native soldiery can do.

Then came amalgamation, and the stage was set with multitudes of new actors. Quantities of names and functions unheard of appeared in the staff list. Railways, Legal, Forestry, Agriculture, Veterinary, Prisons, Audit, the departments grew and grew, old skeletons put on flesh and new bodies were created, until we became an important and flourishing concern. Lieutenant-Governors with secretariats arose, and other secretariats central and native, with new grades and sub-departments in every branch, and last a Legislative

Council, with native elected representation upon it in the best manner of progress and reform.

Quot homines, tot sententiæ—and these appear in quantities of the written word. Archives must be becoming enormous now in secretariats and all over the place.

We spread ourselves on paper nowadays, though of course there *is* more to write about, but I shouldn't wonder if, hidden away in some office box, stained, mouldering, or cracked by the dry climate, you would find some yellow papers whose few pages of manuscript in faded ink are full of meaty information more to the point than some of the twenty pages of typescript which are received or sent to-day.

Yet in these days such things must be. The bigger machine grinds comfortably along, and if it takes some time to turn the pig into the sausages, still the sausages are good.

One can live comfortably in Nigeria with a little trouble. Housing near the coast starts well, but peters out as you go north. At Lagos there are some good bungalows, well furnished with electric light and main water, bathrooms and most of the comforts added, such as ice, soda water and cold storage. Along the line these *agréments de la vie* drop away bit by bit. Kaduna has its bungalows rather in reduced circumstances. Light and water have disappeared, the furniture is more rough and scanty, and cold storage has dwindled to the boat-train. Still farther into the wilds of provincial headquarters the bungalow is a struggling growth, with furnishing of the scantiest, until at last you reach the districts and local efforts in mud. It is a slow and costly business to lodge the District Officer in brick and tin.

My own experience was a normal one. There were spasmodic intervals when I lived in bungalows varying in comfort from the stone palace of Kano to the condemned and dangerous boxes of Kontagora, but mud was my chief housing element and, except that my quarters in 1906 would have nicely stabled a horse and those in 1924 an elephant, there wasn't much difference between them other than better protection from sun and rain.

The cost of living varies. In Lagos and the south an unmarried junior can be comfortable on £350 a year, in the northern bush he can do it on half, excluding liquor and provisions he brings from home. For up there things are cheap enough; your meagre fowl costs 9d., the duck 2s., and eggs are ten for 3d. A cook at £36 a year, steward at £24, and grooms at £12 is the usual cost of staff, and most necessities are on this basis. Servants are not really good, but they might be infinitely worse, and since I left them their value seems somehow to have grown in memory and in comparison with some sorts at home. So much depends on how one treats them. To lose one's temper, as we all do sometimes, and shout at them, does no earthly good, they only lose their heads and become incapable. Cold sarcasm is lost on them, and curses roll off their woolly heads like water. Resignation is one's own best remedy, and an occasional whipping theirs, for fining is abominable and often leads to pilfering, and nagging is a thing they hate but don't improve on.

I kept my servants for many years. Each had his definite work, and his hours of ease. Good service got rewarded with higher wages, cheek and sullenness led to instant dismissal, and on the whole I was well served.

Wherever the English go they take their games and pastimes with them, in Nigeria they play them all. On a big station there is any amount of them, and even in the bush a single solemn enthusiast will hit a ball of sorts at golf or polo practice if he can find a piece of ground to do it on.

There is shooting in plenty, as I have told. For birds there are francolin, guinea-fowl, quail and sand-grouse, with greater and lesser bustard, hares and pigeons. The marshes hold every sort of geese, duck, teal and widgeon and a few snipe, and any one may find a use for a couple of thousand cartridges in a year.

The big game can be found in the deeper bush, and there is still a fair amount for keen hunters to come across at small expense except that of exertion.

What of the drawbacks to this life? Well, there is the climate. It is not a good climate, one would not expect it to be in tropical West and West Central Africa. Some men say that it is maligned, pointing to themselves or others who have been out there twenty and thirty years. I have known a few who went on saying it till they died—quite suddenly—of the results of it, and couldn't carry on the argument. But I know that it is not good. It is not merely the fever, the sun heat and the wet; it is all of these and more, some sun ray which saps the life and energy and weakens the ill-nourished blood.

The water is indifferent. Even to wash in, it is often every grade of colour and consistency and of evil smell. To drink, it is poor stuff. It must always be boiled and filtered, and whether it be that or taken from a condenser it is flat, stale and most unprofitable, and is best drunk with whisky.

Of smaller physical discomforts there are plenty. The mosquito is always there to annoy; bloodsucking flies and tsetse, the tumbo fly which leaves an ugly reminder of his visit, the mango fly and others. I have read or else some one told me that there are one hundred varieties of snakes in Nigeria; there may be, for I have seen a good many. Some are quite harmless, though it is not for me to prove it. No doubt they will not usually attack one unless interfered with, but there are so many occasions when they drop from the roof, or hide beneath bath sponges or dark corners and bite at the least provocation. A fair number of Europeans have been bitten, but to my knowledge only one has died; and the native mortality from snake bite is not heavy, though there is a spitting cobra which spits first at the eyes and inquires after; one nearly blinded a friend of mine.

The scorpions, black and red, are common everywhere, and most of us get stung at some time or other. The flying ants, large and small, are troublesome in the early rains, they flutter out of the dark into the lamp-light, smother your food, ruin your drink, and getting down your neck they loose their wings and crawl about until you squash them. There is also the *chinaka*, a tiny ant who wanders over your skin and leaves a fierce and fiery trail of stinging pain wherever he goes, which lasts a long time and grows worse before it is better. These, with a host of other pests, insects which bite and crawl and smell vilely, are enough to give some idea of the little worries.

Diseases from which Europeans suffer are actually few. Malaria, blackwater fever, dysentery and anæmia are the principal, with a rare case of yellow fever and

cerebro-spinal meningitis. Health in general has undoubtedly much improved since I went out, due to betterment of conditions, more regular lives and better cooking and the care of food. To the coming of European women to look after their husbands much is due, and though there are still a few men who disapprove of the ladies' presence in Nigeria, for one reason or another, results have proved the wisdom of the course in the increased welfare of the majority.

What a country of natural resources this is! In agriculture you have almost everything that Africa will grow; the different millets, rice, wheat and maize; the roots, yam, cassava and the sweet potato. There are onions and sugar cane, pepper and ginger, kola-nuts and ground-nuts. Other things are indigo, henna, gum and fibres of all sorts, shea nuts and productive trees of many kinds. Cotton grows widely and well, and is going to be a big feature in the coming prosperity, and the timber of the south is as good as any in the world.

Coal in the south, tin in the north at present, but who knows what further value in minerals or oil will not be found presently? The northern provinces are pasturing to-day over four million head of cattle, and with judicious crossing with home stock and some stall feeding should export excellent beef, while proper flaying will increase by 50 per cent. the value of all hides and skins.

Industries in Nigeria are primitive. They could be improved with better tools and technical instruction. The cottage trades of dyeing, weaving, smelting and metal work, the arts of embroidery, leather and brass work, glass work and straw plaiting are all capable of finer output, and careful training in carpentry, mechanics



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EDUCATION

and all engineering would succeed, for the native has proved his aptitude for learning. We have made a start in this, and the Director of Education is carrying out a programme from which much is to be hoped.

Speaking generally, one can see no limit to the country's expansion in every direction, and that it will come in time there can be no doubt. Whether Nigeria will ever become a land for real settlement and colonization it is hard to say. White men cannot labour with their hands from morn to night under that tropic sun. White children have been born out there, but they will find it difficult to thrive, and at present it looks as if the obstacles to permanency are very great; yet after all one never knows, and there may be a solution coming.

There is no race which can beat the British in handling natives. We don't go out to their countries with entirely altruistic motives, no one does. We have our own country's interests to serve. But where we score is that we believe in keeping up the native's end, and helping the "under dog in the fight." We attack our subject in a manner quite our own, putting aside all thought of a hurried exploitation of the country at the expense of its inhabitants. We start in by abolishing the evils which we find there—slavery, human sacrifice and intertribal war; after that we check famine, prevent disease, ensure the safety of the land, and then we see how to turn it into a going concern. Meanwhile we do nothing much to make ourselves comfortable while we are at it. Nigeria has no towns like Dakar and Konakry in French West Africa, where you find boulevards of shady trees, cafés, gardens, restaurants and picture palaces, or like Cameroons and ex-German South-West Africa, with its buildings and conveniences.

Cheerfully we settle down in homes of mud with another patch of mud to play our games on ; we eat rough food and carelessly ; we go sick, we die or we recover, and if the gods are good to us we retire holding on to what remnants of health and strength are left to us ; but the point is that, taken all in all, we leave the native in a rather better case than when we found him.

I have written little enough of the individual Englishmen I knew in Nigeria, and that is from no lack of personal interest in them, for their good companionship has been one of my greatest assets out there, but it is the people and their country that I have chosen to describe, and the impression both have made on me.

It is a fine country, but a country for the young man. The old stager, unless he be exceptional—and there are few—is lumbering up the way, and should make room for youth. For I know the work is hard and trying under the conditions ; it demands and needs the best of bodily and mental powers, and all the energy that one can give it. When these flag, not temporarily for need of change, but seriously and permanently, it is time to hand the job on to others, for work half done out there is work ill done, and that is not what is wanted in Nigeria.

So to that life and work I bid good-bye with much regret. It holds for me, as such lives must, memories both good and bad, pain and pleasure, failure and success, but on the whole it leaves a sense of right good times, and I commend the country to the new generation. For all who like a life of freedom, the open air, responsible work and a feeling of individuality which life in a crowd can never give, there is no better place than this to find it.

Though I myself shall not be there to see them fulfilled, there lie before Nigeria great hopes, great possibilities and the finest future, and I can conceive no better work for Englishmen than the helping to accomplish these, and the carrying on of the Imperial spirit, which is our country's greatest asset ; and surely that is a thing to cling to.

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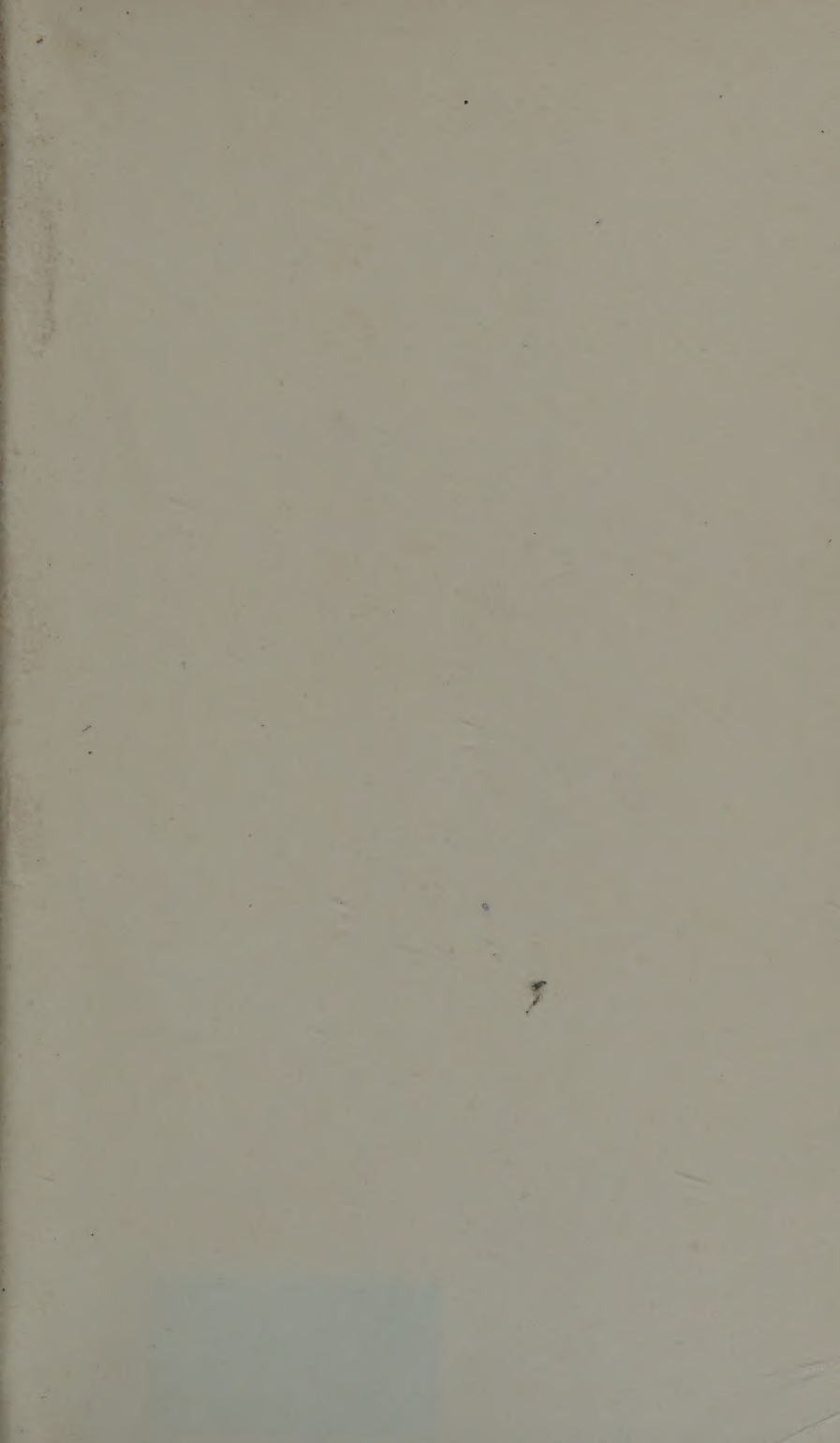
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